PlayStation 3 ■ PlayStation Portable ■ PlayStation Network ■ PlayStation 2

PlayStation®
The Official Magazine

MARCH 09

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WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

RESIDENT

PlayStation - The Official Magazine Issue 17 (March 2009)

EVIL

Two editors • Hundreds of zombies
One tale of co-op triumph!

PLUS: What's the story?
Complete Resident Evil timeline

SAVE CASH BY PLAYING GAMES!
15 Top Tips To Beat The Credit Crunch

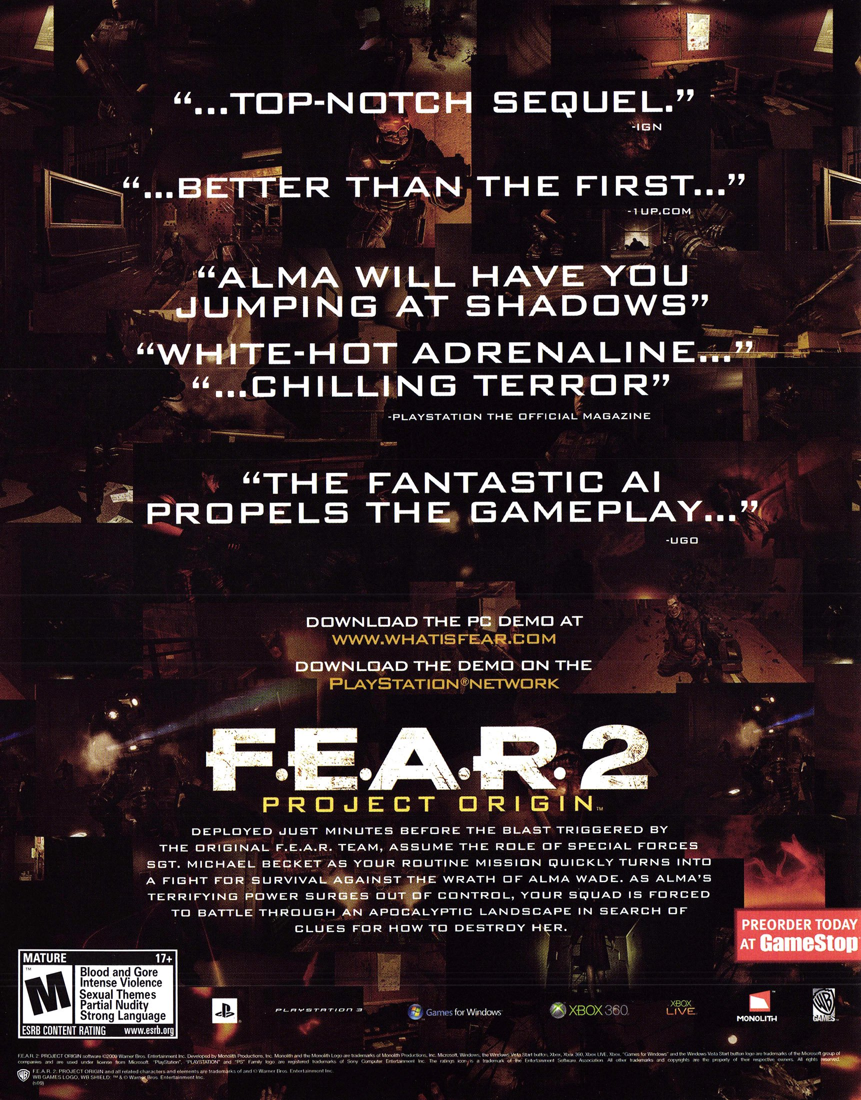
A GIRL'S LIFE IN HOME
Learn from Tizzy's wild adventure

Hot PS3 Exclusives
C&C: Red Alert 3
Guitar Hero: Metallica

Reviewed
F.E.A.R. 2
Skate 2
LocoRoco 2

10 GREATEST MOMENTS IN RESISTANCE 2
(you might have missed)

Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION



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(s09)

FEAR ALMA AGAIN
HE SEES ME
ARMED
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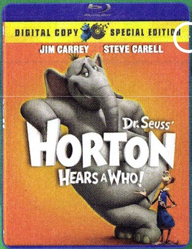
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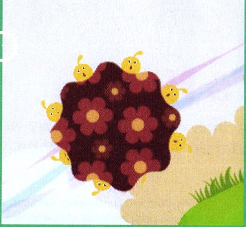
Economy weak...
PlayStation 3 STRONG!

"How about now? Is this too close? Am I still creeping you out?"

"Dude! You have *got* to get that checked out by a doctor. That just don't smell right!"



Oh sure, this would be fun seven-eighths of the time, but just wait till it's your turn on the bottom.

"Momma done tol' me that gamin' weren't no way to make a livin'."

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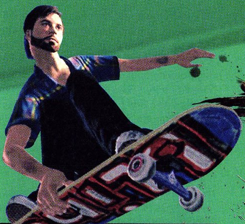
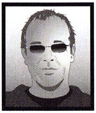


Um, nothing really witty to say here. We just like staring at this picture.

COMMAND & CONQUER
RED ALERT 3



Editor's Note

"First, you were like, whoa! And then we were like, WHOA! and then you were like, *whoa.*"

Things to get off my chest before… before…before something nasty happens:

1. *sniff* Gary. Gary Steinman. "Our" Gary. Don't go, Gary. Promotion? EIC chair? Career progression? Please don't go to our sister magazine, *PC Gamer.* Stay with us, where it's warm, and fun, and, well, because we'll miss you. What? He's gone already? No time for pleas that go on just a little too long. Gary has headed up the PC path. We'll miss his dashing good looks, collection of oh-so-manly plush dolls, his wit, and wisdom. Okay, moving on…

2. …PlayStation platforms in 2009, my predictions:

A. PS3 price cut in late March/April. It ties in with Sony's corporate financial year. It's "that time." It's needed. How much? Cheapest PS3 for $250. Do it, SCEA, do it.

B. PSP 2.0 (4000? 2010?) will be announced. Why? Though we love our stylish handheld, the broad functionality, that oh-so sweet screen, Skype, remote play, the fact is that the games haven't performed for publishers (we won't even mention UMD), Nintendo's DS has captured massive market share, and the PSP's space has been squeezed by—of all things—the iPhone. Demographically, the likely PSP-owning/using/coveting/evangelizing audience has a hugely appealing alternative that makes it appear that you're "working" using productivity software, when in fact you could be downloading free apps (and, crucially, free game demos) from the iTunes Store. The solution? An all new all-in-one: games, movie downloads, music storage, calendar/communication software, the works. In fact, let's get this ball well and truly rolling: what features would you demand of a new PSP device to make it a must-have. Thoughts to the usual address at the end of the column.

C. PlayStation 2 continues to sell units, and cheap ports are made of mainstream games and licenses. Ideal for younger kids, it quietly ticks along, staying out of mischief, but staying profitable.

D. The PS2 open platform plan will actually mean something. Though a European initiative, it will help Russian and Indian developers in particular to bring low-cost products to the platform, the potential for making this available to a broader audience could be the impetus for Sony to uncover the next stars of PSN.

E. Massively multiplayer games *(DC Universe Online, The Agency,* and hopefully options from NCsoft so long as it crests its recent troubles) will make the PS3 a go-to platform for online console RPGs.

3. Tough one, but I don't ever, EVER want to see another PlayStation 3 TV ad that doesn't bother to show or even mention the PlayStation 3 itself. PlayStation Network "feel" ads? Really? Best move on quickly.

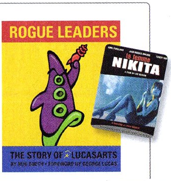
4. Damn you, gamers. The oft-maligned sequel-itis at the corporate juggernaut of EA is vanquished in favor of doing the "right thing" in signing and publishing a range of high quality original IP games *(Mirror's Edge, Dead Space, Spore* (on PC)). And what do gamers do? Don't bloody well buy them, that's what. So what's the message? We're not willing to try something new? Or does the positive critical reaction to these games set the stage for more interest in the sequels?

Okay, feel better for that. Remember to send your thoughts, comments, ideas, and entries to the quote contest (above) to **PTOM_editor@futureus.com**.

Rob

Win a Blu-ray movie!

Keep the quote contest entries coming. Identify the movie that you see quoted at the top of this page, and send your answer, along with your name and shipping address to **PTOM_editor@futureus.com** with the words Ed Note March in the subject line. I'll randomly pick a winner, just like I did for Nancy Booth of Aberdeen, WA, who'll be getting a movie and a copy of my book, *Rogue Leaders: The Story of LucasArts* (now available at all good book stores!)



PlayStation The Official Magazine

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THE BOTTOM LINE

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH (AND AMBITION) IS!

What could make each of your multiplayer gaming moments even more enticing? Having cold hard cash on the line. Are you ready to bring it?

Woody Levin
CEO and Founder, BringIt.com

The U.S. government (and even managing bodies of the major sporting organizations) may not want to believe it, and certainly won't acknowledge it, but millions of people obsess over individual sports events because they have money riding on it. Whether it's a friendly rivalry with a buddy or painstakingly researched playing of the lines in Vegas, one wager can make that late Thursday night Hawaii college basketball game mean so much more.

Parlay that logic to your gaming hobby. Woodrow (Woody) Levin was at Madison College in Wisconsin, playing videogames with buddies, spicing up the entertainment by putting beers or a few dollars on each map. "When that was over, everyone moved to different parts of the country and we needed a new way to keep the challenges alive," says Levin. That spawned BringIt, a website that's a hub for gamers to get together, place challenges, and play for real cash.

But aren't most forms of gambling illegal in the U.S.? "It's not gambling, it's skill-based gaming," says Levin, and that's not only legal, it was explicitly excluded from the Internet gambling prohibition act that was rushed through to law in late 2006. Currently nine states (Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Montana, Tennessee, and Vermont) prohibit this kind of activity, so if you live there, you can't join in. But for the rest of the free country, signing up for a BringIt account lets you search by game platform (PS2 and PS3 included) for certain games, and lay down challenges that other players can pick up. Want to play for $1, fine. For $10, have at it. For free, well, okay, but what's the point in that!? How about more? "We have safeguards, and limit what you can play for, using an algorithm skill system," says Levin, "so you can't come in and play immediately for $100. We ensure you've played at least 20 games so we can get an accurate ranking and an opponent understands what they're getting into." Of course, many players want to test their skills against the best, and BringIt has its own team out generating interest in the site.

"We're really about the community," says Levin, citing the 24 hours a day, seven days a week, live customer support. That's got to be reassuring to folks putting their real cash on the line. You don't need to fund your account with your credit card or Paypal account at first (though you'll be playing without bets until you do), but once you decide to whip out your wallet, you can set a challenge, choose an amount, and wait for someone to accept. Then you'll swap PSN IDs, get together in-game, play away, and go back to the BringIt site to report the results. The site's only been live since November, but the seven person team is already adding new functions, such as integrating automatic score reporting if you choose to have your EA Sports game send the optional email of game stats to your [username]@report.bringit.com account. That way, the winnings (less a 10-percent service fee per entry) can be posted automatically to the user's account. This also eliminates issues caused by inaccurate result reporting, though Levin claims that less than four-percent of matches are currently challenged.

BRING IT
CHALLENGE. PLAY. EARN.

Tournaments, possibly with other companies providing sponsorships, are also possible, using a winner-takes-all format. As the community grows (the forums and the challenges were still relatively quiet at press time), no doubt bigger events will occur, and new champions be crowned.

Sign up for an account at BringIt.com and then keep your eye out for the game you want to play, or set a challenge yourself. The detailed rules and regulations are posted in the FAQ, and support seems quick to respond to queries on the forums.

As Levin says, gaming is still growing, and its position as a low-cost-per-hour entertainment source has kept it strong through the economic slow down. Now just imagine having even a dollar or two on that *MLB 08: The Show* match-up—it might be just the juice you need to keep focused and practicing.

PS3 Too Pricey? Sony Fights Back

We've done it ourselves in past issues, but finally SCEA has come out swinging at the misdirection perpetrated by various other organizations over the underlying costs of their respective console systems. It's a fact that you get more in the box with PS3 than you do with any other console. By the time the others have caught up (if they even have the option) the prices are, at the very least, comparable. Take a look for yourself at the chart SCEA recently released. Oh, and perks the chart doesn't mention? Built-in Blu-ray support, a whole slew of exclusive games, and Sony's promise of 10 years of new services and features. If you've been awake at all, you've already seen proof of the new content: just take a look at Home (free!), the Video Delivery Service, and the frequently updated PlayStation Store.

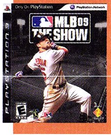
Specifications	Sony PS3 (80GB)	Microsoft XBOX 360 Arcade	Nintendo Wii
Out-of-the-box price	$399	$199	$249
Wi-Fi	Included	$100 add-on	Included
Hard-Drive	Included (80GB)	$100-$150 add-on (60GB-120GB)	Not Available
Online gaming service	Free!	$50 per person, per year	Limited
HDMI output	Included	Not available in earlier models	Not available
TOTAL COST	**$399**	**$449-$499**	**$249**

Hot Off the Press

Minutes before we were set to ship, we got wind of EA's new Sports Complex for Home. It's a sports-themed game space with leaderboards, EA Sports trailers, and some exclusive new games. (We saw racing, golf, and poker.) We told you it was going to build steadily! You'll have to wait until spring for the EA Sports game space to go live, but keep your eyes peeled to Home and the PSN for other little goodies in the meantime.

FIFA 09
FIFA 09

Yankees ♥ PS3. **Sony and the New York Yankees have signed a deal that will see Sony Electronics grace the all-new Yankee Stadium, to open this April. Aside from Sony Bravia TV screens, PS3s will be available in the suites. Wonder if they'll include the first-party baseball game, *MLB 09: The Show,* given its cover star plays second base for their "friendly" rivals, the Boston Red Sox?**



PS3: Cuts Carbs, Counts Calories, Slims Costs

Who, for fear of voiding warranties and making a right mess of their system, is really going to take apart their PS3 to see what it's made of? Much like the Magic 8 Ball of our childhoods, it's difficult not to wonder what goes on inside those shiny black cases. In fact, a staggering number of individual components comprise the guts of the console, and it's the accumulation and assembly of numerous pieces that establishes the hard unit cost to Sony to produce each system. From that number, Sony has to crunch bigger numbers to decide how much it has to charge consumers (factoring in market conditions and creating enough lines on a spread-sheet to make your eyes glaze over, then fail completely).

Electronics analysis and research company iSuppli has revealed several fascinating pieces of data about the hard unit cost of the PS3, and particularly, how those insides have streamlined to bring down the hard unit cost of each PS3.

Most dramatically, the so-called "second generation" PS3s contain only (hah) 2,820 individual parts—down from the 4,048 found in the 60GB launch version—at an estimated cost of $448.73 to produce, as opposed to the original $690.23. So while Sony is still selling the system at a loss, these lower production costs make a price drop (or system sales profitability) a far more realistic possibility.

And how exactly was Sony able to make this happen? Well, mainly by consolidating many smaller components and integrating their functionality into the Integrated Circuits, including Nvidia's Reality Synthesizer (itself costing $58.01 now against $83.17 at launch), IBM's Cell Broadband Engine ($46.46, down from $64.60), and Toshiba's I/O controller. Not only does this mean fewer parts to purchase and manufacture, it allows for reduced power consumption, and thus further drives down costs.

Basically, today's PS3s are leaner, meaner, and more efficient than ever. Now if only we knew how those 8 Balls worked…

Bill of Materials and Cost Comparison for New and Previous Versions of Sony PlayStation 3 Video Game Console

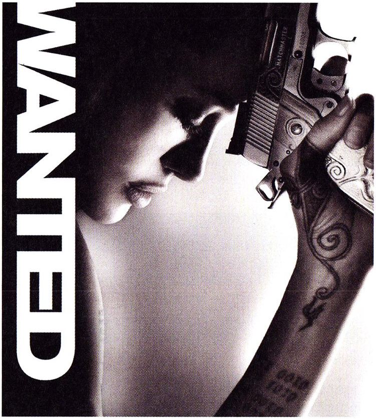
	PREVIOUS GENERATION SONY PS3 (FROM MID 2007)			NEW GENERATION SONY PS3 (FROM OCTOBER 2008)		
COST	**% of Total Component Cost**	**Sum of Total Component Cost**	**Component Count**	**% of Total Component Cost**	**Sum of Total Component Cost**	**Component Count**
Console Total	93.12%	$642.72	3846	91.37%	$415.74	2631
Controller Total	3.02%	$20.85	202	3.44%	$14.84	189
Manufacturing Cost Total	3.86%	$26.66		3.99%	$18.14	
TOTAL	**100.00%**	**$690.23**	**4048**	**100.00%**	**$448.73**	**2,820**

Source: iSuppli Corp. December 2008

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION INTERVIEW

PETE WANAT

A veteran [and ebullient] producer shows his love of this industry.



Most writers around the games industry love talking to Universal's Pete Wanat. Not only is he deeply knowledgeable and passionate about the games industry, he'll generally give you a straight answer to a direct question, even if you might not like what you hear. As such, he's somewhat unique, but his game credits speak for themselves. You may not have played the superb *Chronicles of Riddick* (Xbox 360 only), but trust us, it was truly excellent. Reviews on *The Thing* and *Scarface* were mixed, but you can't deny that they introduced some inventive gameplay scenes and mechanics, and challenged some of the popular thinking about game situations. Now he's producing the game version of the effects spectacular (and we're not just talking about Angelina Jolie emerging from the regeneration pool) *Wanted,* being developed by the Spanish studio of European developer, GRIN.

PTOM: What has been your experience working with the PS3 so far?

Pete Wanat: I'd love to do a PS3-only game. The single SKU means big quality, but for economic reasons you have to do cross-platform. Developers are just beginning to see what it can do. I hope it's around for 10 years because the big advantage of the PS3 going forward is the amount of stuff you can put on that [Blu-ray] disc. That's game stuff, levels, art, content.

Has Sony provided help to developers to get over the learning curve?

Yes. The squeaky wheel gets the grease, but they will really assist. But we're lucky at GRIN [developers of *Wanted]* because we have guys really in tune with the PS3. *[Wanted]* runs fast, and the frame rate is really good.

What's your take on Home?

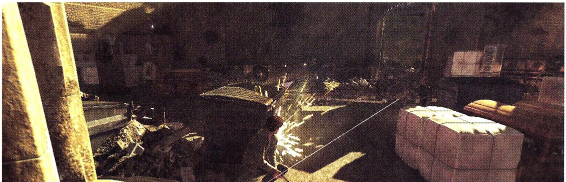
I was in the beta and really enjoying the experience. What I want to see is when I get a Trophy, it gives me money so I can buy things for my home space. Achievement points aren't worth anything if it's just about bragging. But let me spend… It's the same as peacocking in an MMO. I just hope [Sony] doesn't lose faith in it, because it has good ideas. You just need to have that need to get stuff…that need to play that certain game because it will pay off in Home. If you make it so that the only way to get money is to play content, then everything is about content absorption.

Your *Scarface* game took some stick from the critics, but you're still pretty proud of what you achieved?

I get emotional about my games… We stole unabashedly from *GTA;* those guys are geniuses, and those games are so great, but *Scarface* had the cell phone and heart meter. We looked at *GTA* to see where it could be surpassed. But they did the same thing, and used those elements in *GTA IV,* which was validation. I take this stuff really seriously, and I care about what [reviewers] say.

What was it like dealing with the movie studio?

I've worked with Bill Kispert [VP of Interactive at Universal] since 2001 on *The Thing, Riddick,* and *Scarface.* He did *King Kong* with Ubisoft, and he's one of the unsung heroes of why most Universal movie games are better



The eight times Wanat watched the *Wanted* movie before the premiere, he saw a different opening sequence. Now you can view that original scene as part of the special features on the Blu-ray movie release.

Wanat expects to hand back the game story for movie director Timur Bekmambetov to pick up, just in case of a sequel...

than other studios'. We've done a good job educating the execs at the studio so that they get it. But we make sure that the first thing we are is the guardian of the game. It's about the story, but if the game sucks, no one will get to the story. The execs, from the top down, actually get that. Some of the stuff Universal has planned over the next five years is going to amaze people. Some of it is stunning... the games people there are not second-class citizens. I work for a company and the objective is to make them money. But if we make a good game, then we get the budget and the time for an even better game.

> "We make sure that the first thing we are is the guardian of the game. It's about the story, but if the game sucks, no one will get to the story."

What was [comic book scribe] Mark Millar's role in the game production?
He contributed, going beat by beat through the levels in the game, relating it to the story. And we did all that with the writer of the game in the room. One of the reasons one of the characters changed (from male to female) was based on Millar's feedback.

Some of your other favorite games of the past year?
I'm a lover, not a hater. I love games. *Kane & Lynch*—I really enjoyed it. I saw reviews knocking the characters but I've never seen characters like that. I'm not sure I'd play the single-player, but it was great co-op. *Left 4 Dead* on Steam is another. I would love to see Valve do a game especially for the PS3. But I'm still stunned by *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* from last year. You can play that and see and feel the artistry that went into building it.

Wanat worked with Timur to ensure the game mimicked the movie's visual style, not the comic book, with each scene carefully matched for color and detail.

Pete Wanat 411

TITLE: Producer, Universal Interactive

JOB BEFORE GETTING IN THE GAMES INDUSTRY: Production Assistant on ESPN's *SportsCenter* and *Baseball Tonight.*

FIRST GAME YOU WORKED ON: *NBA Jam TE* in 1994. I came to Acclaim's White team from ESPN, and used my background in sports to learn games. I also did *All-Star Baseball* and *NFL Quarterback Club* for the Nintendo 64.

PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT: Probably *All-Star Baseball* from the sports era of my career. I'm also really proud of *The Thing,* its emotional context, and it really made me think about games differently.

NUMBER OF TIMES WATCHED *WANTED,* THE MOVIE: Eight. The premiere was the ninth.

NUMBER ONE TIP FOR A YOUNGSTER TO GET IN THE INDUSTRY: Pursue it. Play games you like. Write to developers. Go to Game Developers Conference and talk to developers. Nobody will hand you an opportunity so you have to go get it. Go start in QA. Whatever you're interested in, find a way in. Take notes, write reviews of every single level so you can see them in an analytical style. Start a blog. If you're an artist, get it out there. Send resumes. Instead of a book report in school, ask if you can do a game review, and push your education to fit your goals. But remember, it will never come to you, so pursue it.

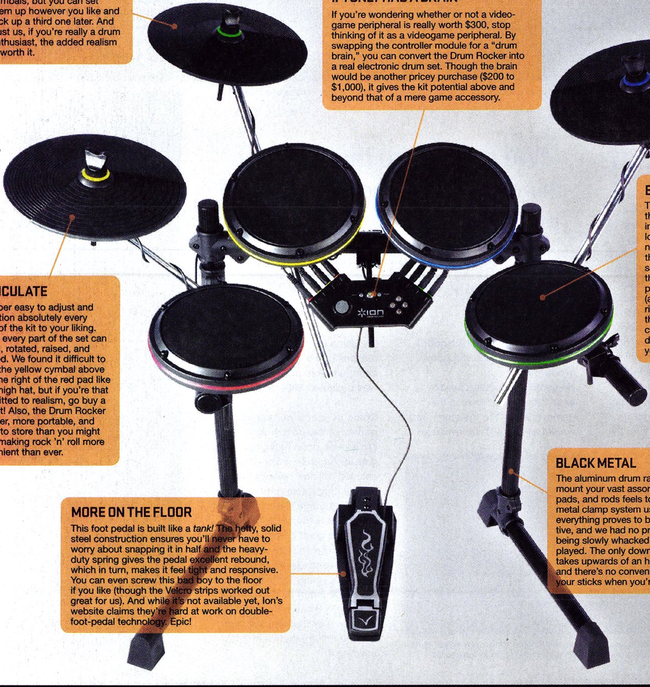
PlayStation Digest

Top Stories, Industry Bits, and Oddities

DIGITAL DRUMMING

PERFECT RHYTHM

So now that *Rock Band's* puny little drum set has given you a taste, are you ready for the good stuff? Then welcome, game drummers, to your ultimate wish fulfilled: the ION Drum Rocker, a super high-end drum kit compatible with both *Rock Band* games (but, unfortunately, not with *Guitar Hero: World Tour).* It'll set you back a cool $299.99, but after spending a few days rocking out on one these, we're confident devoted drum fans will find that it's worth every penny. Check out **www.drumrocker.com** to grab one for yourself!



CYMBALISM

Nothing's quite as satisfying as thwacking an actual cymbal to end a solo, especially since the game can distinguish between pads and cymbals and plays the appropriate corresponding sound. For whatever reason, the set only comes with two cymbals, but you can set them up however you like and pick up a third one later. And trust us, if you're really a drum enthusiast, the added realism is worth it.

IF I ONLY HAD A BRAIN

If you're wondering whether or not a videogame peripheral is really worth $300, stop thinking of it as a videogame peripheral. By swapping the controller module for a "drum brain," you can convert the Drum Rocker into a real electronic drum set. Though the brain would be another pricey purchase ($200 to $1,000), it gives the kit potential above and beyond that of a mere game accessory.

ARTICULATE

It's super easy to adjust and reposition absolutely every piece of the kit to your liking. Nearly every part of the set can be slid, rotated, raised, and lowered. We found it difficult to place the yellow cymbal above or to the right of the red pad like a real high hat, but if you're that committed to realism, go buy a real set! Also, the Drum Rocker is lighter, more portable, and easier to store than you might think, making rock 'n' roll more convenient than ever.

BOUNCE BACK

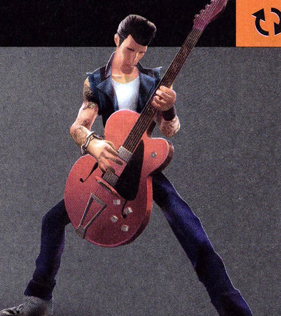
The drum pads are arguably the highlight of the set. With impressively realistic rebound, velocity-sensitive hit detection, and nigh-indestructible construction, the pads make for an immensely satisfying experience. And since they're arguably quieter than the pads on the *Rock Band* drums (assuming you avoid hitting the ridiculous plastic rings bordering the pads), this is probably as close as you can come to the real deal without invoking the wrath of your neighbors.

MORE ON THE FLOOR

This foot pedal is built like a *tank!* The hefty, solid steel construction ensures you'll never have to worry about snapping it in half and the heavy-duty spring gives the pedal excellent rebound, which in turn, makes it feel tight and responsive. You can even screw this bad boy to the floor if you like (though the Velcro strips worked out great for us). And while it's not available yet, Ion's website claims they're hard at work on double-foot-pedal technology. Epic!

BLACK METAL

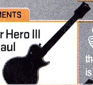
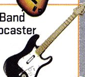
The aluminum drum rack on which you mount your vast assortment of wires, pads, and rods feels totally solid. The metal clamp system used to position everything proves to be simple and intuitive, and we had no problems with pads being slowly whacked out of place as we played. The only downside is that the kit takes upwards of an hour to assemble, and there's no convenient resting place for your sticks when you're not playing.



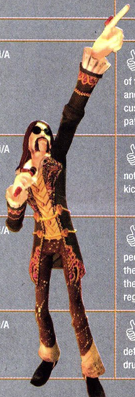
Rock Gear Cheat Sheet

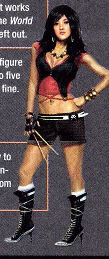
There are two reasons for not buying all the assorted guitars and drum kits that come with music games. First, the combined cost of all that fake plastic rock is enough to cripple the economies of most developed nations, let alone the disposable income of your average bedroom headbanger. Second, the resulting nightmare of dongles, straps, and bulky drum kits is almost impossible to store without a custom-built house extension. Here, then, is our guide to the inter-compatibility of the PS3's various instruments and games, to make it easy for you to supplement your existing setup, or plan a new one from scratch. God bless rock 'n' roll.

GAMES

INSTRUMENTS	Guitar Hero III	Guitar Hero: World Tour	Rock Band	Rock Band 2	Rock Revolution
Guitar Hero III Les Paul 	👍 Looks and feels basic now, but the Les Paul that's packaged with the game is both durable and functional.	👍 Works fine with the *GH* update, but it doesn't have the *World Tour* guitar's touch-pad fret.	👍 Initially incompatible, but finally patched in September 2008.	👍 Works out of the box with no need for a patch.	👍 *Rock Rev* doesn't have its own guitar, so out of the box cross-compatibility was a priority.
Guitar Hero World Tour Generocaster	👍 Designed by Neversoft to be backwards compatible, but the touch-pad fret is garbage.	👍 A perfect fit. No surprise as the Generocaster was made for *World Tour.*	👍 Needs a patch, which is downloaded as soon as you load the game while online.	👍 Support built-in without download.	👍 Works immediately, with no download.
Rock Band Stratocaster 	👍 Requires long-awaited patch download, then works perfectly.	👍 Works, but the Strat's lower fret buttons don't sub in for the *GH* Generocaster's touch-pad.	👍 If you just want a basic guitar, the quieter strum bar makes this feel less plasticy than *GH III's* Les Paul.	👍 Essentially the same as the improved *Rock Band 2* Strat, so the functionality is identical.	👍 Works with no patch required.
Rock Band 2 Stratocaster	👍 You'll need to download a patch first, but then it works perfectly.	👍 Works, although as above, the lower frets can't be used instead of the touch-pad.	👍 The *Rock Band 2* Strat is the same as the original but with quieter buttons, so backwards compatibility is no problem.	👍 There's no better guitar with which to play *Rock Band 2* than the one it's packaged with.	👍 No patch needed. It's so easy when the game doesn't come with its own peripheral.

Guitar Hero World Tour	N/A	👍 The only game that takes full advantage of the kit's unique pad and cymbal layout, with custom-designed note patterns.	👎 A sore point—even though *Rock Band 2's* been patched, the original *Rock Band* still won't recognize the *World Tour* drums on PS3.	👍 A recent patch fixes *Rock Band 2* for the *World Tour* drums, but the second, orange cymbal isn't used.	👍 Reduce the "lanes" (note colors) from seven to five in the menu, then aside from the fact the orange cymbal still isn't getting any love, it works fine.
Rock Band	N/A	👍 *World Tour* automatically reconfigures the notes to four colors and the kick pedal.	👍 Yes, though it might be worth upgrading to the *Rock Band 2* kits if you want to use cymbals.	👍 Works fine, though you can't add *Rock Band 2's* upgradable cymbals to the *Rock Band* kit.	👍 Reconfigure from seven to five lanes in the menus and it works even better than the *World Tour* kit—no pad left out.
Rock Band 2	N/A	👍 Reconfigures to four lanes plus the pedal. Even if you've got the upgradable cymbals, they'll only be recognized as regular pads.	👍 And you can use the cymbals too—they're simply duplicated versions of two of the four pads, so the note patterns are unchanged.	👍 *Rock Band 2* drums unsurprisingly work flawlessly with *Rock Band 2!*	👍 Again, reconfigure from seven to five lanes and it works fine.
Rock Revolution	N/A	👍 Just as with the *Rock Band* kits, the game defaults to four lanes, but the drums do still work…poorly.	👎 Unconfirmed. But as *Rock Band* remains unpatched for the *World Tour* drums, we think it's unlikely.	👍 The same patch that fixed the *World Tour* drums also sorted the *Rock Rev* kit.	👍 The only way to get full, seven-pad functionality from the *Rock Rev* kit.





PlayStation Digest

Real Ultimate Power

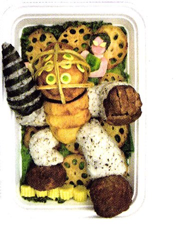
Using the unimaginable processing power of 200 linked PS3s, an international team of computer scientists managed to crack the Internet's figurative vault. Basically, the team found a way to create counterfeit digital certificates—which are security measures that let your browser confirm that you are connected to a legitimate website and not a fraudulent imitator—thus allowing them to digitally impersonate any site on the web. Fortunately, these scientists were not of the evil persuasion and have already put their findings towards improving online security systems. Looks like we can add "fighting crime" to "curing cancer" on the PS3's list of most altruistic accomplishments.

PlayStation Protection

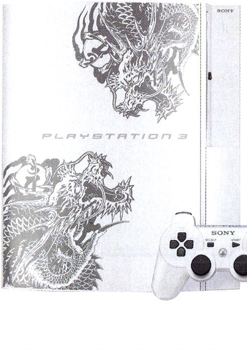
If your cute little PSP has been feeling a bit vulnerable lately, why not keep it snug in a protective case from Case Logic? Available in both hard-shell and soft-sided varieties, these sleek, tasteful sleeves offer ideal protection without hindering your system's portability (and the hard-shell version even has a pocket for storing UMD disks and other accessories). Coming in at $17.99 and $14.99 for the hard and soft cases respectively, this could be a smart way to keep your system out of harm's way.

Undersea Delicacy

Who would have thought Big Daddies could look so delicious? Well, a woman named Anna from New York, apparently! Check out her creations at **http://annathered.wordpress.com/.**

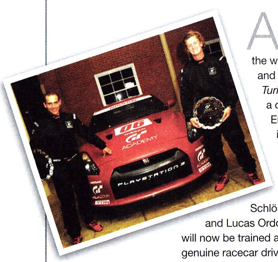


Enter the Dragon



Feast your eyes on one of the prettiest PS3 models yet. This limited edition, 80GB machine comes—as you might expect, given the distinctive dragon decals—as part of a special *Yakuza 3* bundle that drops on February 26. The bad news? It's only available in Japan. Hopefully, that's just for the time being. We'd love the console (and game!) to reach the U.S. at some point.

From *Gran Turismo* to Grand Prix

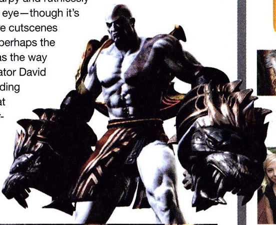


See, mom! Playing videogames *will* get you somewhere in life!

After eight grueling months of competition, the winners of Sony and Nissan's *Gran Turismo* Academy—a continent-wide European contest involving both videogame and real-life racing—have been crowned. Lars Schlömer of Germany and Lucas Ordóñez of Spain will now be trained and certified as genuine racecar drivers, and will join Nissan's racing squad at this year's 24 Hours of Dubai endurance race. Looks like all that time behind *Gran Turismo's* virtual wheel really paid off!

Life on Mars

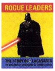
At Spike's 2008 Video Game Awards show last December, we finally got our first glimpse of *God of War 3* in action, and due to the Homeric levels of epicness, our eyes may never be the same again. The trailer—which included in-game footage—showed off a number of exciting new game features, including a new wall running maneuver and a pair of lion's head gauntlets that look heavy enough to crush a mortal man's soul. The Greek's sure knew how to make some brass knuckles, apparently. The video also contained a few jaw-dropping cinematic sequences—such as Kratos dramatically ripping the wings off a Harpy and ruthlessly impaling a Cyclops' only eye—though it's unclear whether these are cutscenes or actual gameplay. But perhaps the best part of the trailer was the way in which *God of War* creator David Jaffe reacted to it. According to him, another trailer that is only being shown internally at Sony looks "25- to 30-percent better," with stunning textures, animations, and detail. Hell yes!



If you haven't already, see the full trailer at www.gamesradar.com/video/v-2008121592841265044.

TOP10LIST

What we're consuming, playing, enjoying, and being distracted by this month. It helps us cope with the state of the economy.



Rogue Leaders: The Story of LucasArts | Book | $60
Oy. This little chestnut again? Well, it's officially on-sale now, and you can get it on Amazon for less than $40, so please check it out. Please. Maybe then Rob will stop chirping on about the damn thing and we can all forget about it. If you do buy it and read it, and leave a review on Amazon, please say something nice so that Rob's fragile ego isn't warped and he takes out his fury on the rest of us.

Hulu.com | Website | Freakin' Free!
Though he's kinda late to the party, Scott has finally discovered the marvelous online television repository known as Hulu.com. With an already impressive selection of movies and shows, it offers a pleasant alternative to regular old TV—especially since the infrequent commercial breaks never last more than 30 seconds. For all you slackers who missed *Arrested Development* and *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog,* now's your chance to see 'em for free!

SNOWBALL RUNNER
START
SCOREBOARD
CREDITS

Snowball Runner | iPhone game | $0.99
As a favor, Teresa downloaded *Snowball Runner,* an iPhone game that her friend's friend developed. Lead a snowball safely down a mountain by tilting the iPhone and avoiding obstacles… Now, Teresa usually detests games that use the iPhone's accelerometer ("way too much work"), but this one she enjoyed because it let her steamroll herds of penguins and Scottish terriers. Oh, and because her friend's friend made it.

SwitchEasy Colors case for iPhone 3G | Accessory | $14.99
Well, Roger's finally done it, he got an iPhone 3G. Now, he's on the obligatory quest to find just the right case to protect his new baby. Although he expects to go through a half dozen candidates in the next few weeks, his first pick more than satisfied his expectations. SwitchEasy's silicon Colors case offers exceptional fit-and-finish at an extremely reasonable price. And it comes in pretty colors! Check out their full line at www.switcheasy.com.

Koalas | Animal | Free
Damn, they're cute. But don't call them koala bears, just koalas is the official name, should you find yourself in the Antipodes (as apparently the Brits occasionally refer to the Aussies, when not commenting on their convict past). So they just eat eucalyptus leaves and sleep for nearly 20 hours a day, but it's not a bad existence, as Rob discovered at the Featherdale Wildlife Park outside Sydney. Blah, blah, blah, Sydney, Australia, woop-di-doo.

Julia Nunes | Musician | Free
Singer-songwriters who posses both talent and personality are something of a rarity, but YouTube sensation Julia Nunes boldly defies the odds by being completely awesome in every way. Armed with her ukulele, powerful voice, and infectious enthusiasm, she's tackled some of pop's most memorable tracks and penned a few surprisingly heartfelt and catchy originals too. Take Scott's word for it and search her name on YouTube. You won't be disappointed.

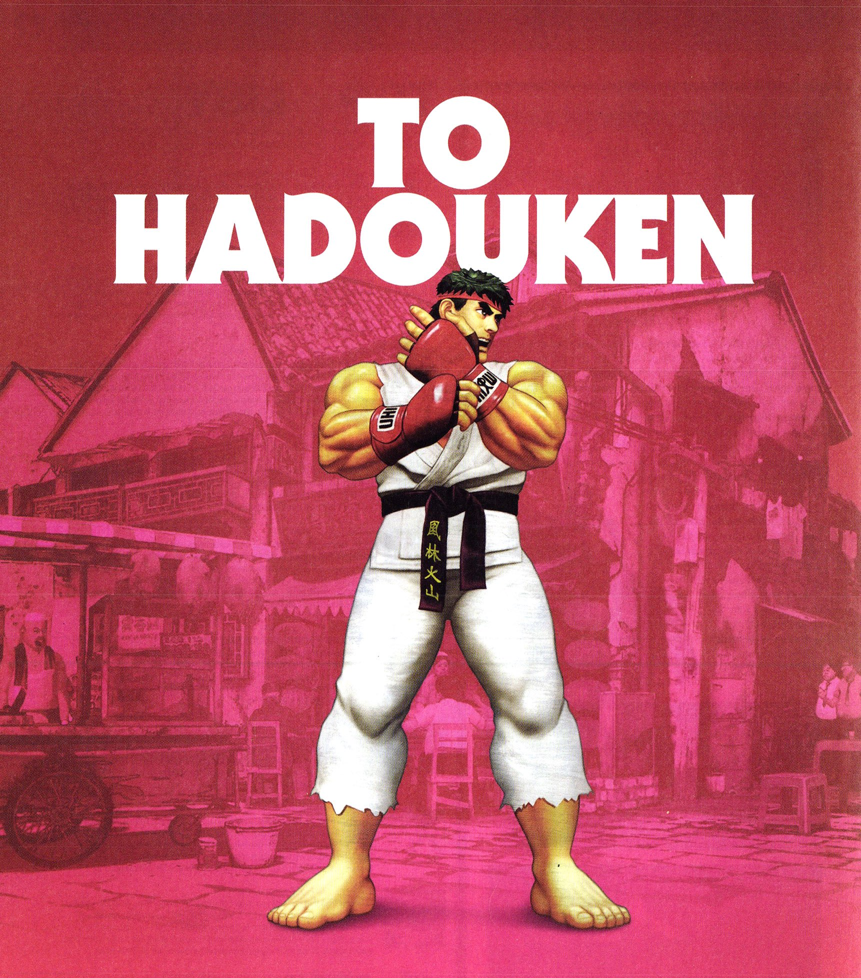
Gossip Girl | TV Show | $1.99 per episode
Teresa wouldn't call herself a fan of this overly melodramatic teen series, but when her brother tossed her his iPod Touch before a 20-hour, trans-Pacific commute, the first season of *Gossip Girl* was all she had for company. Now she's hooked. B and S and Lonely Boy and the ridiculously foolish J and their lavishly excessive surroundings haunt her dreams, whether Teresa likes it or not.

High-Resolution Screen Shots | Desktop Backgrounds | Free…sorta
One small pleasure Scott derives from his job (other than, you know, getting to write about all these amazing games) is the never-ending supply of awesome desktop images. All of the art that gets printed on these pages first comes to us in digital form…pristine, high quality digital form, perfect for the old "right click, set as background" treatment. See? It's the simple pleasures in life that really count.

Appa | Canine | $225 Adoption Fee
Roger decided that two kids just wasn't enough of a handful, so he went and adopted a puppy from the San Francisco SPCA…during the holidays. Madness has ensued, every manner of item in his home has been chewed through—including his screen door, but Appa has settled in nicely. After all, he wouldn't fit into the family profile if he wasn't insane. So here's the PSA: Adopt an animal, save a life. SF SPCA rocks.

SPORT BEANS

Jelly Belly Sport Beans | Fortified Candy | $1 per pack
Continuing to serve as a shining physical example to rest of the staff, Ken's *candy* even comes with nutritional benefits. Packing performance enhancing carbs, electrolytes, and vitamins B and C, Ken favors the Lemon Lime flavor. Ahh, if only Barry Bonds had been steered straight by Ken's confection, there'd still be joy in Pac Bell (Oops, AT&T) Park with mighty Barry at the bat.



TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Alcohol Reference
Mild Suggestive Themes
Violence

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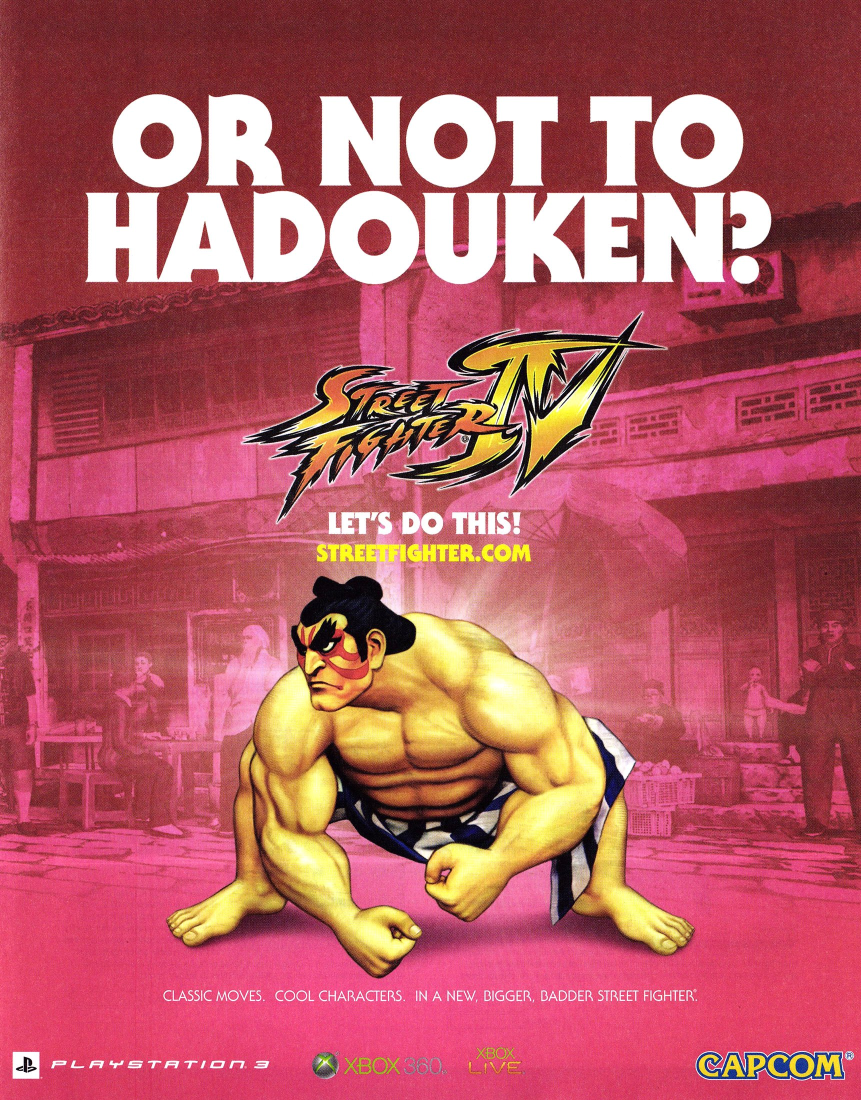
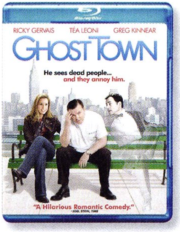
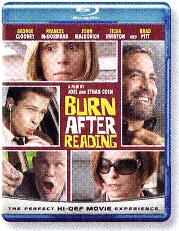
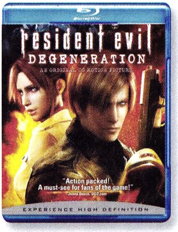

OR NOT TO HADOUKEN?
STREET FIGHTER IV
LET'S DO THIS!
STREETFIGHTER.COM
CLASSIC MOVES. COOL CHARACTERS. IN A NEW, BIGGER, BADDER STREET FIGHTER®.
PLAYSTATION 3
XBOX 360.
XBOX LIVE.
CAPCOM®

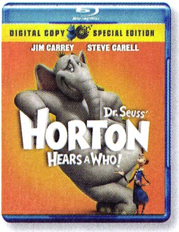
Blu-ray Central On St. Patrick's Day, we watch Green-rays

This month: action, excitement, and a parade of awfulness! An awful lot of awfulness... Stay tuned, true believers!


Blu-ray Disc
RICKY GERVAIS TÉA LEONI GREG KINNEAR
GHOST TOWN
He sees dead people... and they annoy him.
"A Hilarious Romantic Comedy."


Blu-ray Disc
GEORGE CLOONEY FRANCES McDORMAND JOHN MALKOVICH TILDA SWINTON AND BRAD PITT
A FILM BY JOEL AND ETHAN COEN
BURN AFTER READING
THE PERFECT HI-DEF MOVIE EXPERIENCE


Blu-ray Disc
resident evil
DEGENERATION
AN ORIGINAL CG MOTION PICTURE
"Action packed! A must-see for fans of the game!"
EXPERIENCE HIGH DEFINITION


Blu-ray Disc
DIGITAL COPY SPECIAL EDITION
JIM CARREY STEVE CARELL
Dr. Seuss'
HORTON HEARS A WHO!

Ghost Town

PRICE: $39.99 RATED: PG-13

| MOVIE | Americans are starting to give English comic, Ricky Gervais, some well-deserved attention, and hopefully this superbly offbeat romantic comedy will be a push in the right direction. Gervais is perfect as an intolerable jerk that suddenly finds he can see dead people, and hates it. The movie wades into traditional waters, but the dry humor is dead on, and the main characters have excellent chemistry.

| EXTRAS | The making-of shorts are mostly throwaway, but fans of the hilarious Gervais will enjoy his lively commentary with the director.

MOVIE ★★★★½
EXTRAS ★★½

Burn After Reading

PRICE: $39.98 RATED: R

| MOVIE | Try not to consider the fact that *Burn After Reading* is the Coen Brothers' follow-up to *No Country for Old Men.* If you do, it makes the movie even more awkward than it already is. The performances of the amicable cast are really the only draw here, because the plot is a complete mess of unrealized promise. The maze of characters and threads sadly don't amount to much, and while the movie is fun in spots, it ultimately falls flat.

| EXTRAS | Surprisingly few extras accompany the movie—just a few featurettes that are moderately amusing and that's it.

MOVIE ★★½
EXTRAS ★★

Resident Evil: Degeneration

PRICE: $39.95 RATED: R

| MOVIE | First, the Capcom-developed *Resident Evil* movie is thankfully far, far better than the atrociously bad live-action travesties. Second, it's probably only of real interest to fans of the game. The movie fits right into the game universe, focusing on Claire Redfield and Leon Kennedy as they fight yet another T-virus nightmare in an airport. It's not fantastic entertainment by any means, with its clunky dialogue, but looks great and should make fans happy.

| EXTRAS | Nice extras for fans include a mock interview with Leon, character profiles, a look at *Resident Evil 5,* and some picture-in-picture threads that you can switch to during the movie.

MOVIE ★★★½
EXTRAS ★★★

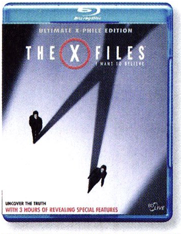
Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who

PRICE: $39.99 RATED: G

| MOVIE | Dr. Seuss would almost certainly smile at this wonderfully vivid translation of his work. Thanks to sharp dialogue, great voice acting, and a gorgeously bizarre and true-to-the-book visual style, this is an animated movie that will make most adults laugh more than their kids.

| EXTRAS | A lot of extras round out a great presentation. Granted, most are aimed at its target audience (y'know, kids), but there's a lot of mostly amusing stuff for the tikes to trek through. Solid commentary leads the way, but the new *Ice Age* short, *Surviving Sid,* is the biggest draw. In addition, there are deleted scenes and an array of other humorous inclusions that should still entertain the kiddies after they've sat through the movie for the hundredth time.

MOVIE ★★★★
EXTRAS ★★★★


Blu-ray Disc
ULTIMATE X-PHILE EDITION
THE X FILES
I WANT TO BELIEVE
UNCOVER THE TRUTH
WITH 3 HOURS OF REVEALING SPECIAL FEATURES

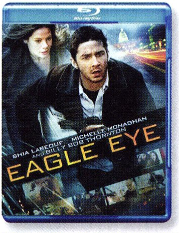
The X-Files: I Want to Believe

PRICE: $39.99 RATED: PG-13

| MOVIE | On the one hand, it's nice to see Scully and Mulder back together again. On the other hand, fans will likely wish it had been under better circumstances. The interplay between the main characters is great, yet the actual mystery is perplexing in how uninteresting it all is throughout the movie. Like the first *X-Files* movie, this is basically just an extended length episode. Unfortunately, it's not an especially good one.

| EXTRAS | The Blu-ray certainly pays lip service to fans with a lot of potentially interesting background material about the characters and the show, engaging commentary with Chris Carter and co-writer Frank Spotnitz, and a lengthy documentary. The extended cut runs a few minutes longer, adding some extra gore and character interaction, but doesn't add a whole lot to the movie.

MOVIE ★★½
EXTRAS ★★★½


Blu-ray Disc
SHIA LABEOUF MICHELLE MONAGHAN AND BILLY BOB THORNTON
EAGLE EYE

Eagle Eye

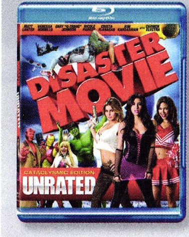
PRICE: $39.99 RATED: PG-13

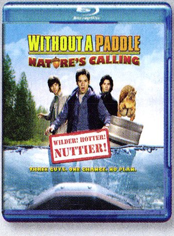
| MOVIE | *Eagle Eye* was a much better movie when it was *Enemy of the State*... or *WarGames,* or even *Live Free or Die Hard.* It's notable because the plot is even more preposterous than usual. As popcorn munching fare though, you could do worse. The movie looks and sounds great, features some excellent stunts, and doesn't overstay its welcome.

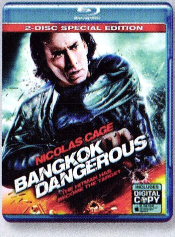
| EXTRAS | Though the main making-of short is actually surprisingly in depth, the rest of the extras are completely forgettable. The filmmakers and cast try their damnedest to have you believe that all the improbable action really could happen, and director D.J. Caruso goes so far as to have a sit-down with *WarGames* director, John Badham, over the similarities between the two movies.

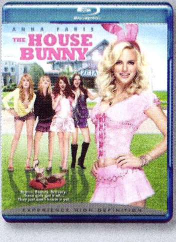
MOVIE ★★½
EXTRAS ★★

CRAPTACULAR ALERT! VIEW AT YOUR OWN PERIL!









Disaster Movie

PRICE: $39.99 **RATED:** PG-13

| MOVIE | Look, it's pretty obvious some of you keep going to these movies…and those dumbass *Saw* travesties as well. That's why they keep making this crap. So, please, stop. The guys who made *Disaster Movie* churn out these awful, so-called parodies like return bouts of celluloid diarrhea, and the results are just as tasteful. Seldom even clocking out at 90 minutes, each insufferable minute is yet another reason why mankind is doomed and deserves it.

| EXTRAS | The extras are better than the movie, but then so is a coffee enema. The commentary with the young, soon-to-join-Tara-Reid-in-obscurity cast is completely superfluous, and there are music sing-alongs, along with some other behind-the-scenes shorts. The disc also includes the MoLog functionality, so you can make the movie look even worse!

MOVIE
EXTRAS ★½

Without a Paddle: Nature's Calling

PRICE: $36.99 **RATED:** PG-13

| MOVIE | The original *Without a Paddle* was noteworthy for having one of the most hilariously wrong jokes that one man can play on another. The straight-to-video sequel doesn't have that joke, but starts out surprisingly well. So much so that it lulls you into a false sense of security, at which point, a small army of CG squirrels start making rude gestures at the three hapless heroes and then proceed to chase them out of the woods. Evil Disney squirrels can kill most movies, and they certainly do a fine job of it here.

| EXTRAS | It's a straight-to-video flick, so the extras are lackluster—only a few making-of shorts that aren't worth much, a gag reel, and some so-called "hilarious" deleted scenes—just in case you were wondering where the laughs went.

MOVIE ★½
EXTRAS ★½

Bangkok Dangerous

PRICE: $39.99 **RATED:** R

| MOVIE | It's unclear if Nicolas Cage's latest mess is supposed to be an action movie, or a black comedy about the most dysfunctional hitman ever. It works better as a comedy, but either way the movie is atrocious. At times, the humor works (probably unintentionally)—such as when Cage's hitman tries to hit on a deaf clerk. He's the social equivalent of Rain Man in these scenes, but when the final, perplexing climax arrives, it feels like the punchline to a bad joke played on the audience.

| EXTRAS | Lionsgate is into including their MoLog functionality that essentially lets you violate the picture by adding clip-art level graphics, text, and audio. This might actually make the movie better simply by obscuring it with pointless crap. Other than that, there are just a couple making-of shorts.

MOVIE ★½
EXTRAS ★★

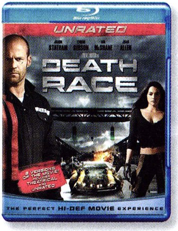
The House Bunny

PRICE: $39.99 **RATED:** PG-13

| MOVIE | If nothing else, Anna Faris looks remarkably yummy in this otherwise dead-from-the-neck-up comedy. The movie itself is so lackluster, clichéd, and simply unfunny that anyone who isn't an easily amused teenage girl will be bored to bits by the brain-dead script.

| EXTRAS | Deleted scenes and some throwaway promo, making-of bits round out an embarrassing cinematic experience.

MOVIE ★
EXTRAS ★★


UNRATED
STATHAM GIBSON McSHANE ALLEN
DEATH RACE
2 VERSIONS OF THE MOVIE! INCLUDES THEATRICAL AND UNRATED
THE PERFECT HI-DEF MOVIE EXPERIENCE

Death Race

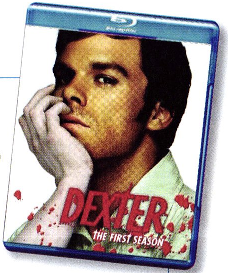
PRICE: $39.98 **RATED:** R/UNRATED

| MOVIE | *Death Race* is, unfortunately, an entirely typical Paul W.S. Anderson flick. Especially in the way it makes you think that it couldn't possibly get any more stupid or wretched, and then, miraculously, does. Like all his movies, it brings to mind a musical of jumping sharks, where otherwise decent, well-meaning actors walk around in a confused stupor of bad dialogue, poorly filmed violence, and inane plotting.

| EXTRAS | Chat, make your own commentary, listen to Paul W.S. Anderson's aimless chatter, and watch not-so-exciting featurettes on how this trashtastic crapfest was made!

MOVIE ★
EXTRAS ★★★

PlayStation: The Official Magazine PICK OF THE MONTH



Dexter: The First Season

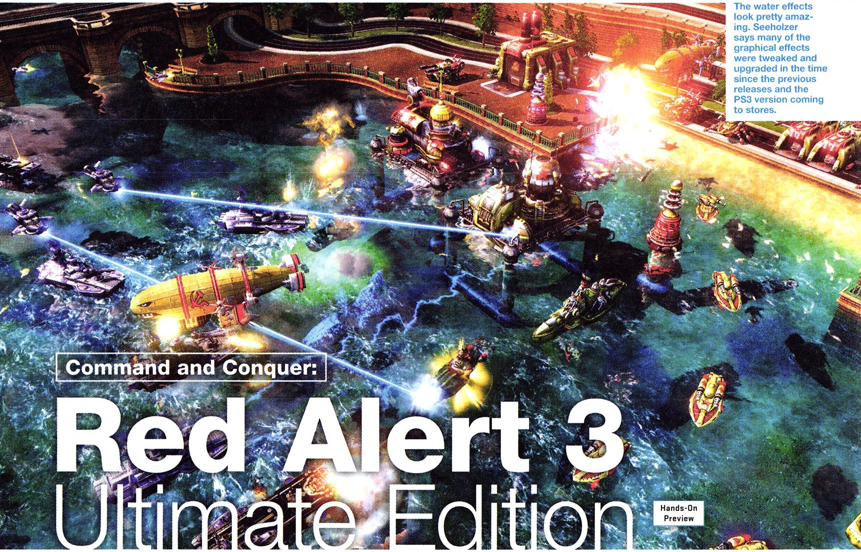
PRICE: $54.98 **RATED:** UNRATED

| MOVIE | Now that *The Sopranos* has run its course, perhaps Showtime will get the attention it deserves for its lineup. Finally releasing *Dexter* season one on Blu-ray (and hopefully the next two seasons), new viewers are in for a treat. *CSI* meets serial killer, *Dexter* is a police blood splatter expert who also happens to be a very focused sociopath. What really sets *Dexter* apart is how all the characters are so well developed. The plotting is solidly satisfying and Michael C. Hall is superb as the likeable killer.

| EXTRAS | Showtime has taken a decidedly different approach here by making the BD-Live functionality integral to the extras. Once online, you can access the first episode of *Dexter* season three, the first two episodes of *United States of Tara,* and several other behind-the-scenes features. It's a strange choice, especially given the slow download times of BD-Live, but one of the few noteworthy uses of this oft-forgotten aspect of the format.

MOVIE ★★★★½
EXTRAS ★★★

Jason D'Aprile says that *Dodgeball* (a Roger favorite), *The Wedding Crashers, Super Troopers,* and *Serenity* also released this month and make great gifts for loved ones. Send any comments for Jason to **PTOM_bluray@futureus.com.**



The water effects look pretty amazing. Seeholzer says many of the graphical effects were tweaked and upgraded in the time since the previous releases and the PS3 version coming to stores.

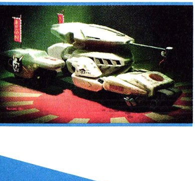
Command and Conquer:

Red Alert 3 Ultimate Edition

Hands-On Preview

Now *this* is an RTS—EA throws the kitchen sink at its PS3 standard bearer

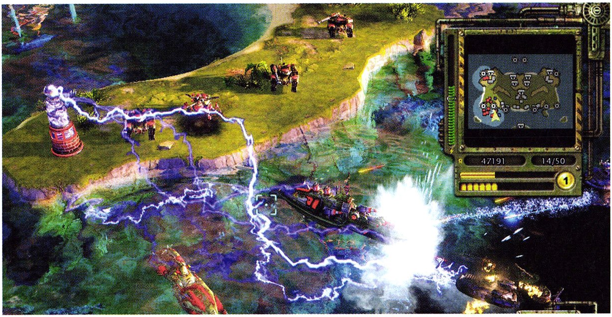
PS3 GENRE: Real-time Strategy AVAILABLE: March PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts DEVELOPER: Electronic Arts



You may not realize it, or even initially believe it, but EA's introduction of the *Command & Conquer* real-time strategy franchise to the PS3 will be one of the most important releases on the platform this year. Sure, it's a release of a game that's already launched on PC and 360. Sure, it's the first time this established series has appeared on a PlayStation platform since *C&C: Red Alert* graced PSone. But as a real-time strategy game boasting an efficient and effective control scheme mapped to the PS3's analog sticks and buttons its critical reception (and sales) could determine the future of the genre on our PS3s. Of course, strategy fans will also pin hopes on SEGA's *Stormrise* (hands-on preview on page 35), but for franchise track record and name-brand identity, *C&C* is the ruler of the RTS roost.

We should also take a brief moment to be thankful. After initially being announced as a PC and next-gen platform game, *RA3* for PS3 was put on hold. But it miraculously returned from the near dead, supported with upgrades and updates over the other versions, to help prove that this genre can and *will* work on the consoles, dammit.

"It was not that long ago that we were wondering if a first-person shooter could be done properly on a console," says Senior Development Director, David Seeholzer. True, but the gameplay leap from running and gunning to building bases, establishing defenses, creating units of offensive troops, and waging war on land, sea, and air, that's a whole nother ball game. The success or failure of *Red Alert 3* on PS3 will



Red Alert vets will certainly crack a smile as they see the Tesla coil carve up Allied assault carriers.

depend entirely on how intuitive the control system is, given that you need to command myriad battlefield options, navigate across the map in an instant, while building, collecting resources, scouting for enemies, and assembling your attack forces.

As Seeholzer told us, this *Red Alert 3* is not the dumbed down cousin of its PC brethren. In our initial playtest, with instructions popping on screen to make sure we were using the right buttons, the progression through the radial command menu proved to be very effective. Sure, when producer Greg Kasavin took charge and rattled off numerous commands, grouped and moved troops, and got his construction directions executed, it was astonishingly quick. What it proved was that it's quite possible (yeah, he's had tons of practice). But what was evident and impressive when I got back in the boss seat was context awareness in the command menus. By pressing one button to bring up the radial menu, then using the left stick to rotate around to your choice of building or unit, all your available options were highlighted, and those not yet unlocked couldn't be selected. That also helped teach the building and unit hierarchy, whereby you can't build z until x or x and y are in place.

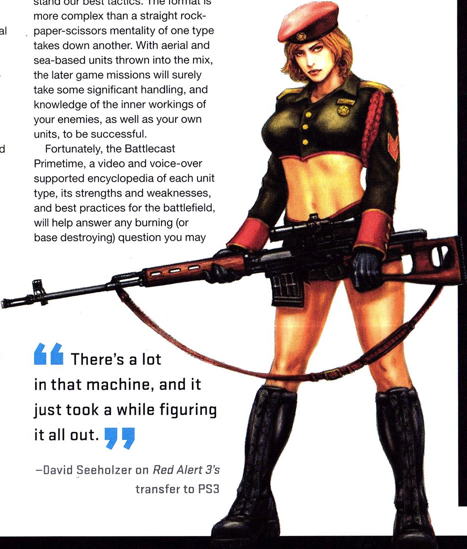
War is a threesome

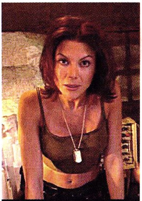
Learning the unit progression, and what units work effectively against others may take a little while given the vast number of options in each side's arsenal. Plus, *Red Alert 3* adds a new superpower to the proceedings; the Empire of the Rising Sun joins the constantly warring Allies and Soviets. Even in our brief playtest it was evident we'd have to study the unit types of each side to understand our best tactics. The format is more complex than a straight rock-paper-scissors mentality of one type takes down another. With aerial and sea-based units thrown into the mix, the later game missions will surely take some significant handling, and knowledge of the inner workings of your enemies, as well as your own units, to be successful.

Fortunately, the Battlecast Primetime, a video and voice-over supported encyclopedia of each unit type, its strengths and weaknesses, and best practices for the battlefield, will help answer any burning (or base destroying) question you may have. Some 40 minutes of additional footage, the Command School sequence, not available in the other versions, were apparently captured to make this a significant part of the PS3 owner's learning library. In the menu it was easy to toggle

➔

> “There's a lot in that machine, and it just took a while figuring it all out.”
>
> —David Seeholzer on *Red Alert 3's* transfer to PS3



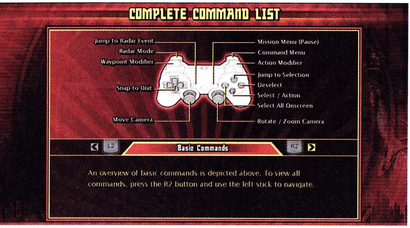


What is *Red Alert?*

BRIEF HISTORY LESSON FOR THE UNINITIATED: Sitting comfortably? Westwood Studios (RIP) dipped its toe in the real-time strategy waters with its 1992 release of *Dune II*. Purists will argue the exact dates, details, and discrepancies about which was the first actual *real-time* strategy game, *Herzog Zwei* or *The Ancient Art of War*, but *Dune II* sat proudly among that early handful.

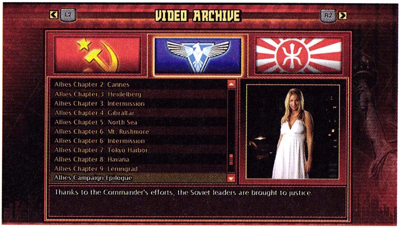
In 1995 Westwood built on the game mechanics of *Dune II* in an original title, *Command & Conquer*. It was a massive success, spawned sequels, and then its own prequel series that helped set the world's position for the events that led to the GDI and NOD faction fighting of *C&C*. The prequel was *Red Alert*, and it told of the Allies and Soviets at war in an alternate universe. It also used live-action video showcasing the emotions and motives of each side's principal characters to tell the story. From a game balance perspective, Westwood knew its stuff, and pitted generally quick, agile Allied units against more lumbering, but powerfully armored Soviets. It also brought the characters from the videos—notably Special Agent (and uber-badass) Tanya—into the gameplay.

As critical and commercial success followed, so did *Red Alert 2* in 2000, further expanding the story. But it's taken eight years for the hugely anticipated third installment to appear, and it's already garnered positive reviews on those other platforms (92-percent from our sister mag, *PC Gamer*, and 90-percent from our wicked stepsister, *Official Xbox Magazine)*.



An overview of basic commands is depicted above. To view all commands, press the R2 button and use the left stick to navigate.

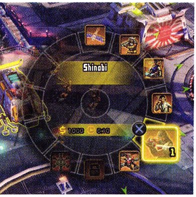
See, it all fits on a single controller (PS3 keyboard/mouse options aren't supported), but an array of advanced commands will also get you building, moving, and attacking still faster.



Allies Chapter 2: Cannes
Allies Chapter 3: Heidelberg
Allies Chapter 3: Intermission
Allies Chapter 4: Gibraltar
Allies Chapter 5: North Sea
Allies Chapter 6: Mt. Rushmore
Allies Chapter 6: Intermission
Allies Chapter 7: Tokyo Harbor
Allies Chapter 8: Havana
Allies Chapter 9: Leningrad
Allies Campaign Epilogue

Thanks to the Commander's efforts, the Soviet leaders are brought to justice.

Each mission presents new video segments telling the unfolding world story, and it's stored in an archive for you to browse at your leisure in glorious 1080p HD.



EA's design team has built on the knowledge and experience gained from past RTS-lite games like *Lord of the Rings: Battle for Middle-earth* to craft the quick-command system.

between any of the three factions, select a unit and see surveillance footage of its uses so that you can understand the functionality. (It should be noted, that though the story sorta carries on from the previous games, there's been a whole bunch of time-shifting shenanigans going on in this alternate universe, which conveniently explains why you certainly don't need any significant *Red Alert* background history to enjoy what's presented here.)

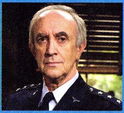
That joins the 90 minutes of other video that tells each side's story, and introduces the most rounded characters a real-time strategy series has ever seen. EA didn't scrimp on the talent, either. Tim Curry *(Rocky Horror),* George Takei *(Star Trek, Heroes),* and Jenny McCarthy *(Playboy)* are just a few of the familiar faces bringing the various factions to life. In fact, the PS3 version has higher quality video playback than any of the other versions, due to the Blu-ray format. "We went back and reconfigured every video at a higher bit rate, simply because we had the space on the Blu-ray disc to do it," commented Seeholzer, adding that even with these upgrades, the game content will clock in at 22 to 23GB, half the total capacity, yet five times that of the PC's DVD. The PC release of *Red Alert 3* included a Premium Edition option, and our PS3 version will include all that content, which aside from what was just mentioned also includes a huge array of Extras, including an enticing "Women of Red Alert" segment, making-of features, unmissable bloopers and outtakes, the soundtrack CD, presented with a user-friendly iTunes-like interface, and more.

PS3 | P

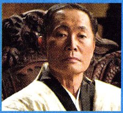
Star Spotting

Red Alert 3 is crammed with familiar faces, ably taking pride in some pretty extravagant set pieces. You'll almost certainly recognize these…

TIM CURRY – Premier Cherdenko
Also seen in: fishnets, lipstick, and high heels *(Rocky Horror Picture Show),* guy heaven *(Charlie's Angels)*

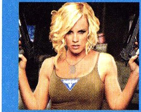


JONATHAN PRYCE – Field Marshall Robert Bingham
Also seen in: the past, present, and future *(Brazil),* a dandy uniform *(Pirates of the Caribbean)*

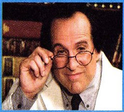


GEORGE TAKAI – Emperor Yoshiro
Also seen where: no man has gone before *(Star Trek),* heroes live *(Heroes)*

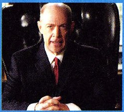
IVANA MILICEVIC – Dasha Fedorovich
Also seen in: virtually nothing *(Casino Royale),* the inside of my eyelids (Rob, stop that)



JENNY MCCARTHY – Special Agent Tanya Adams
Also seen in: the buff *(Playboy),* ridiculous situations (any tabloid)



PETER STORMARE – Dr. Gregor Zelinsky
Also seen in: prison *(Prison Break),* voiceover *(Quake IV, Mercenaries 1* and *2,* and others)



J.K. SIMMONS – President Howard T. Ackerman
Also seen in: newspapers *(Spider-Man),* a career low point *(Postal)*

GINA CARANO – Natasha Volkova
Also seen: kicking ass *(American Gladiators, Fight Girls)*

Tom Clancy's
H·A·W·X
HIGH ALTITUDE WARFARE
WWW.HAWXGAME.COM

PC
DVD-ROM
SOFTWARE

PLAYSTATION 3

XBOX 360

XBOX LIVE

gameloft
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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Alcohol Reference
Mild Language
Violence

Coming March 2009

UBISOFT

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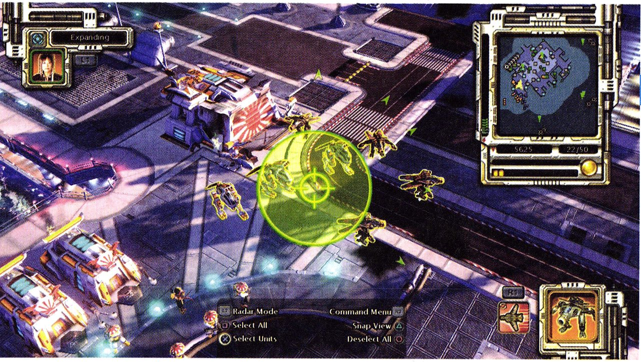
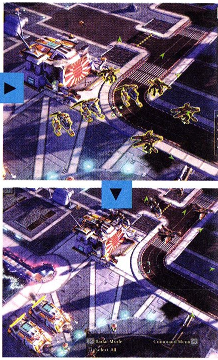
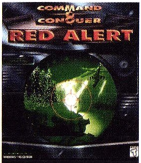


A radar mode expands the map view so that you can move the analog stick very quickly to the location on the map that you want to jump to. It prevents you having to scroll long, and potentially battle-changing distances to see what your units are facing.



You press R1 to toggle these units' secondary ability, then square to get them airborne. Now, take them to attack non-air protected units.



Get *C&C: Red Alert* for FREE!

As part of the 13th Anniversary celebrations (really?) of the release of the original *C&C: Red Alert*, EA made the game available for download for free. Naturally, it's the PC version (though the original was actually released on PSone, it was only made available for download to PSP in Europe) but if you want to see where the franchise started, and get a feel for its game mechanics and play style, as well as some of the inspirations for the current presentation, head to www.ea.com/redalert/news-detail.jsp?id=62 and download away.

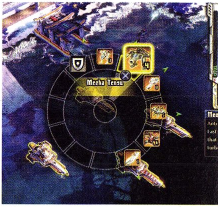
History in the making

Back on the battlefield, in the single-player campaign you'll start controlling the Soviets (though you can leap forward to the Allied or final Rising Sun campaign, but you're jumping difficulty as well as timeline), and work your way through the storyline. The initial commands can seem overwhelming, but handy features like highlighting the best location for your Refinery on the terrain for most effective ore-gathering will help speed you to the fun part of building tanks and troops. When you place a troop build order, setting their rally point automatically becomes the next on-screen command, so the system helps ensure you don't get lost.

For many RTS fans, the true challenge and joy came in the multiplayer arena, pitting strategic excellence against each other. Well, turns out you can do that on the PS3 too. Voice-over-IP support is in, as is a full invite system, and you can play the campaign cooperatively, and in straight multiplayer match-ups. "We were pleasantly surprised how smooth [the online development] went," says Seeholzer, clearly referencing reports when the game was put on hold that it was largely due to technical challenges with the system.

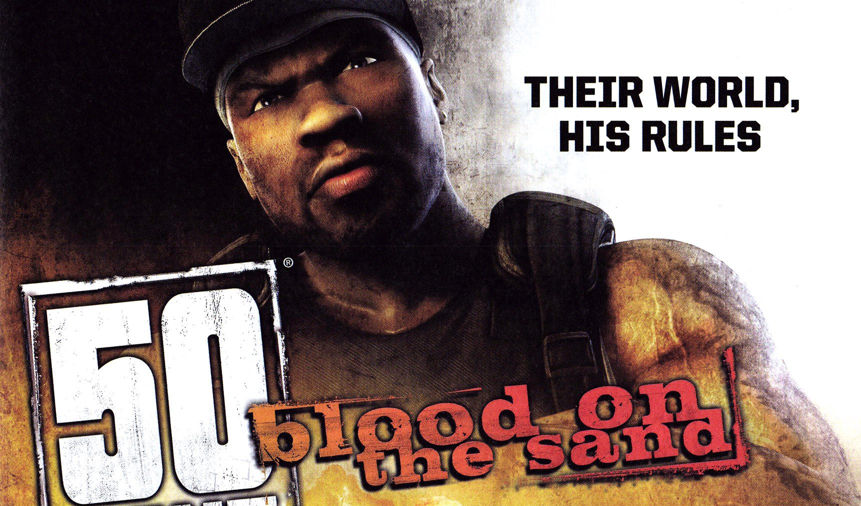
Whatever the case, in our playtest, so many of those concerns appear to have been overcome. *Red Alert* is certifiably one of the great videogame franchises of the past 20 years, and its appearance on PS3 is great news to this old-school PC gamer, but I've no doubt its style (and, possibly, Jenny McCarthy and Gina Carano) will attract newcomers. You may have to be prepared to learn a few new systems and mechanics, but the folks at EA had to do the same to bring the game to the PS3, so don't you owe them the common decency of giving it a try? Of course you do, and I doubt you'll be disappointed.

Rob Smith



Though it looks like a lot of information, the radial menu is surprisingly intuitive, and when you learn the locations of the units, you'll send commands in a jiffy.

Disrespect or effective use of strategic locations? This *is* a war for the ages.



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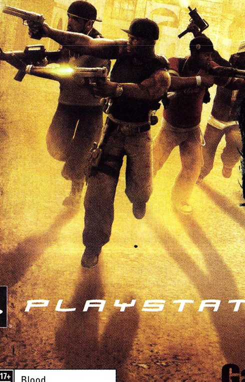

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- GAMESPOT

Fast-Paced Action Shooter

Brutal Melee Counterkills

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IN STORES FEBRUARY 2009

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MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

- Blood
- Drug Reference
- Intense Violence
- Strong Language
- Suggestive Themes

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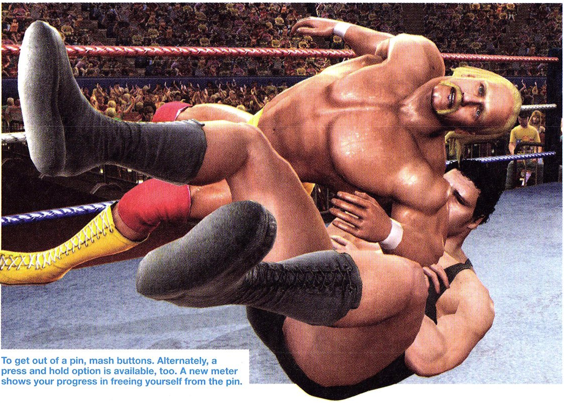
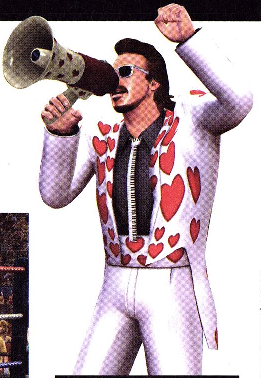
WWE Legends of Wrestlemania

The WWE, through championship gold-tinted glasses

PS3 GENRE: Fighting AVAILABLE: March PUBLISHER: THQ DEVELOPER: Yuke's



To get out of a pin, mash buttons. Alternately, a press and hold option is available, too. A new meter shows your progress in freeing yourself from the pin.



Revealed Legends and Managers

Hulk Hogan
"To all my little Hulkamaniacs, say your prayers, take your vitamins and you will never go wrong."

Andre the Giant
"I just want you to feel you're doing well. I hate for people to die embarrassed."

Bobby "the Brain" Heenan
"I'm a legend in this sport. If you don't believe me, ask me."

The Rock
"Know your role and shut your mouth!

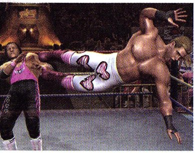
Stone Cold Steve Austin
"Austin 3:16 says 'I just whipped your ass!'"

Jimmy Hart
"When the music stops and the worms are eaten, it will be all over."

Shawn Michaels
"If I had a nickel for every stiff like you that walked into this ring, challenged me and lost, I would be a millionaire... Oh, wait a minute, I am a millionaire and it's because of stiffs like you!"

Bret Hart
"I'm the best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever will be."

PS3 | **P**



Breakin' hearts and breakin' bones: Shawn Michaels delivers a hit on the Hitman.

Austin prepares to deliver the Stone Cold Stunner. The Rock looks appropriately...stunned.

Life was simpler when you were a kid. No worries, no politics. Just…moments. Drama-filled moments of bliss, pain, victory, defeat, learning. Looking back a decade or two, you don't feel confused or lonely. You just feel nostalgic. Or regretful. Or you think, "what if things had happened differently?" But there's no complicated, interconnected story…the memories are all just a jumble of moments.

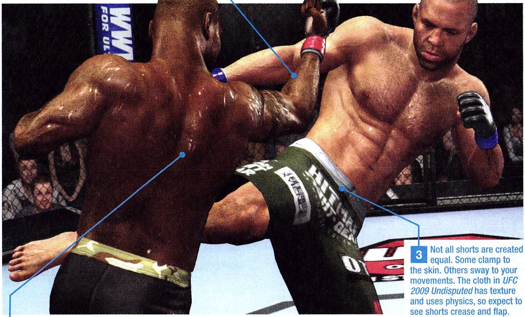
Think of *WWE Legends of Wrestlemania* as the WWE's walk down the series' first 15 years of memories, in videogame form. In Tour mode, you'll be able to "relive," "rewrite," and "redefine" history. In Relive, you'll replay iconic WWE matches as the winner of the matches. It starts with a video montage of actual WWE film that reminds you of the encounter and its highlights (I saw a clip of the Hulk versus Andre the Giant, and it was gripping, to say the least…there were pseudo tears and shirt ripping), and then presents you with a list of objectives to accomplish (reminiscent of the actual fight). Then, you fight. Rewrite mode has you playing as the loser, aiming to change the fight's outcome. Redefine mode lets you play as matchmaker, setting new rules for the iconic matches.

The fighting itself is simplistic, as a memory should be. You'll only ever need the left analog stick and the four face buttons for strike, grapple, defense, and miscellaneous (exit ring, pin, etc.). That's it. As you attack or successfully defend, a "momentum meter" fills. You can either let the meter fill up completely, which nets you a level (there are three levels, the highest of which allows you to perform your finishing move), or you can spend the meter to perform "taunts," which give you health back, speed bonuses, and other temporary perks. The attacks depend on the distance from your opponent (and whether you're moving or standing still). Occasionally, a sequence of face buttons will pop up on the screen. Whoever taps them first will unleash special moves.

Besides the single-player, memory-laden Tour mode, *Legends* will also feature an Exhibition mode, which removes the story altogether. Pit fighter against fighter, without historical relevance. If you're an old school WWE fan, *Legends* is sure to evoke fond memories. But I'm worried the controls might be a bit too minimal to provide the depth demanded by more hardcore wrestling fans and gamers alike.

Teresa Dun

One of the quotes in the Revealed Legends and Managers sidebar is from a movie. Identify the movie and one lucky entrant will win junk from Teresa's desk. Email your answer with the subject line "WWE Quote" to PTOM_Letters@futureus.com.



1 No clipping whatsoever. Not through clothes, skin, or the cage. Flesh interacts with other flesh the way you'd expect. That means bulk. And weight. And "flexible" (not canned) animations, so a late block means the attacker's fist might slip through your defenses, knocking your hand out of the way, but then again, it might not. It depends on the precise positioning of your hands and his hands at that exact moment. At least, that's what Yuke's is proudly promising. And if it works, it'll be amazing. So know this, Yuke's: PTOM is watching. Better deliver.

2 Polygons: 30,000 per model. Frames per second: 60. Sweat: drippy, shiny. Faces: not conventionally "pretty" but high-res pretty. Potential result: visual nirvana. (Cross your fingers.)

3 Not all shorts are created equal. Some clamp to the skin. Others sway to your movements. The cloth in *UFC 2009 Undisputed* has texture and uses physics, so expect to see shorts crease and flap.

UFC 2009 Undisputed

Shirtless men have never looked prettier

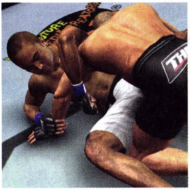
PS3 GENRE: Fighting AVAILABLE: Spring PUBLISHER: THQ DEVELOPER: Yuke's Osaka

Mixed martial arts: it's like worshipping the human body. Such raw splendor, when two fit, muscular fighters (steady on, Tizzy—*Ed.*) of unrelated disciplines enter an octagonal cage to jab, kick, and grapple until one of them submits. Complementing the brawn is a significant display of intelligence (assuming you gloss over the fact they made the conscious decision to enter the ring in the first place) as fighters respond to unfamiliar techniques and attacks. Then you've got the power, in the slow struggles for the tangible but elusive (and indecipherable, to the untrained eye) "advantageous" positions as they painstakingly grapple on the ground.

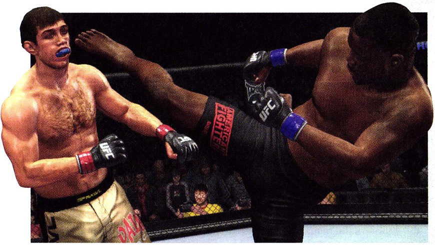
Muscle, brain, reflex. For hardcore UFC fans, Yuke's pledges over 80 fighters, realistic commentary from Joe Rogan and Mike Goldberg, actual mixed martial arts fighting animations, and sharp graphics backed by a brand new engine built specifically for next-gen. For rookies, Yuke's has hinted at a thorough curriculum in the subtleties of the sport, like understanding the strengths, weaknesses, and specialties of individual martial arts, and what happens when you blend two of them together.

This isn't a boxing game. Nor is it a wrestling game. It's no *Street Fighter,* either. But with the mix of melee, holds, and grapples, it's bound to be varied. My brief hands-on experience wasn't enough to show me whether the game is balanced or polished, but it was enough to intrigue me with its subtle complexity and those oh-so glistening ripped abs.

Teresa Dun



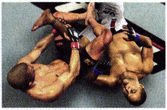
Just because you're on your back doesn't mean you're helpless. Some disciplines specialize in ground control (Judo, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu), others in clinches (Sambo, Greco-Roman wrestling) and stand-up (Muay Thai, boxing).



Damage is tracked to specific parts of the body. Flesh deforms. So if those kicks don't let up, you'll see bruises.

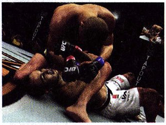
Roster of announced fighters

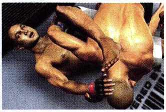
- Forrest Griffin
- Quinton "Rampage" Jackson
- Chuck Liddell
- Anderson Silva
- Michael Bisping
- Roger Huerta
- Matt Hughes
- Wanderlei Silva
- Brock Lesnar
- Kenny Florian
- Joe Stevenson
- Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira
- Frank Mir
- Rashad Evans
- B.J. Penn
- Georges St-Pierre



Ground Control

On foot, it's your typical punches and kicks, with a few special moves. On the ground, it's a whole other game. Pop quiz: which of the positions in these three shots is most advantageous for Georges St-Pierre (black trunks)? Which for B.J. Penn (white trunks)? If you're not sure, you'd better learn fast. Grappling is all about small, seamless transitions between opponents to gain the upper hand. Ultimately, you're trying to pin your opponent into a submission, get them into a position to punch them senseless, or hop back to your feet so you can resume the fight upright. The build I played relied on spinning/arcing the right analog stick to pull off the transitions (fairly technical), but the controls are still being tweaked.





Temple Tower was once a labor union. But then it had a skyscraper built above it. The depth of Grant City's history is evident everywhere you look.

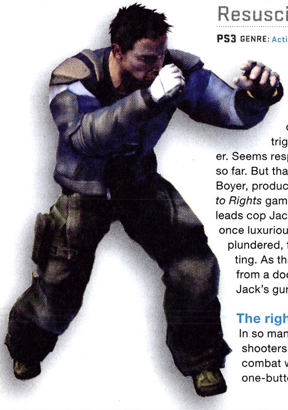
Dead to Rights

Exclusive First Look

PS3 | P

Resuscitated from the grave, and finally looking right

PS3 GENRE: Action AVAILABLE: Q4 PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai Games DEVELOPER: Volatile Games



At first, it looks like an ordinary third-person shooter: duck, aim, pull the trigger, and find new cover. Seems responsive and smooth so far. But that's not what has Mitch Boyer, producer of the new *Dead to Rights* game, so excited as he leads cop Jack Slate through a once luxurious hotel lobby, now plundered, flooded, and left rotting. As three terrorists emerge from a doorway, Boyer holsters Jack's gun, and grins.

The right to bear arms

In so many third-person shooters the hand-to-hand combat works with, at most, a one-button gun jab or a three-button combo. But when Jack kicks and punches the bandana-clad baddie in front of him, tosses a quick strike to the opponent sneaking up on his right (without turning, or even glancing in that direction), and then thumps bandana-boy once more before disarming him and shooting him in the face with his own pistol, it's clear this game has its own unique direction.

"Jack is a brawler," Boyer states, "and the player should feel that as soon as they step into his shoes. We wanted Jack's fighting to allude to his military background and looked at Krav Maga, modernized Wing Chun, and boxing as a start point." I ask Boyer if he'd be disappointed if someone played the game purely as a third-person shooter, without ever experiencing the brawling. To my surprise, Boyer says he'd be thrilled. That's the point of fleshing out all the combat options: to give the player choices.

But Boyer's not done showcasing Jack's prowess just yet. Next, Jack grabs the enemy who tried to sneak up on him. He could toss him out of a window but decides to use him as a human shield instead. The third enemy ruthlessly shoots his cohort, but Jack doesn't budge. Suddenly, a huge shadow falls over him and a growl resonates throughout the water-filled room. It's Jack's partner, Shadow, a half wolf-half Alaskan malamute, who's snuck behind the last enemy. Amidst screams and pleas, Shadow rips the man to bloody shreds.

Later, I see Jack himself get disarmed by an enemy. Boyer quickly sidesteps, dodging a bullet by mere hairs as the enemy tries to pull the same trick Jack showed earlier. I notice there usually aren't crowds of enemies, just two or three, but they tend to maneuver intelligently, in turn demanding that Jack and Shadow act strategically. When Jack takes cover behind a row of crates, Shadow (who you half-command) automatically covers the other side. And though Shadow can turn on the ferocity to intimidate enemies, when Jack is tiptoeing, Shadow smartly follows suit.

Eventually, the two step out of the decrepit hotel, and I'm treated to a sweeping view of Grant City. The metropolis is grandiose, pompous even. It's a tangle of history, over-ambition, and opulence, now riddled with crime and decay. But you can tell: Grant City was once great. And that's why Jack is desperately trying to save it.

The right to free expression

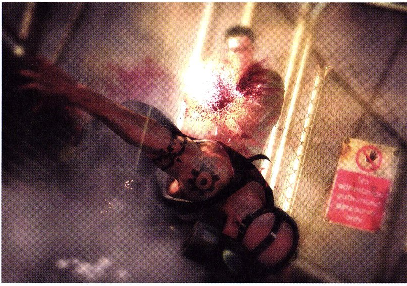
The creators describe this new Grant City as a "Neo Noir Dystopia," and it's a creative reimagining of the *Dead to Rights* franchise. This is not a sequel, or a prequel, or a spin-off. It's a new beginning, like *Batman Begins* to the bigger Batman universe. Volatile Games built the game "from the ground up," analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the earlier games and using them as inspiration to create *their* own *Dead to Rights* world. Boyer elaborates, "We looked at the nuts and bolts of film noir and westerns. We weren't trying to make the game a western or turn Jack into Philip Marlowe, but there are some really compelling elements in those types of stories: moral ambiguity, betrayal, frontier justice…these were all themes that found a home in our vision of Grant City."

So the game begins with Jack, beaten, slumped in a bar, and each level is a flashback detailing how he got to his present situation. Themes of light, dark, and the struggle between the two permeate the story, the art style, the visual storytelling, and even the special effects, all with a single aim: to draw the player into the experience. "It's easy to come up with cackling two-dimensional villains, and strong-jawed heroes, but if the player isn't emotionally invested in what is going on, the whole experience falls flat," states Boyer.

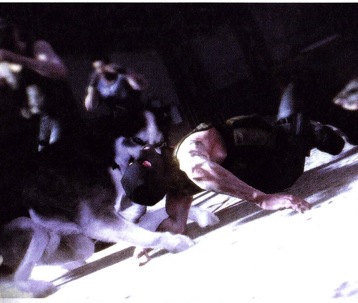
The right to due process

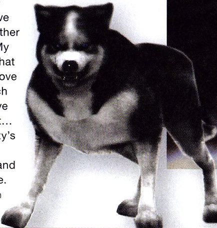
To ensure it all pans out as Volatile hopes—that the melee-to-gun combat is seamless and that the story is emotionally and thematically groundbreaking—Boyer promises, "We've been completely obsessive about every detail. To do *Dead to Rights* justice, we had no other option. My hope is that gamers love it as much as we love making it… Grant City's waiting." Indeed, and so are we.

Teresa Dun

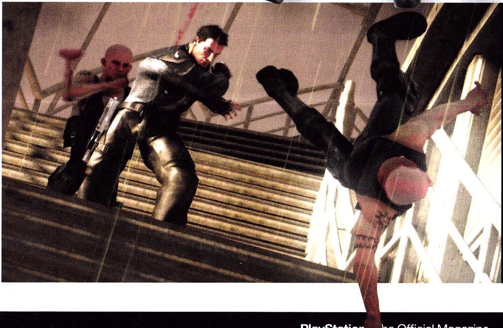


Shadows in the corners, motion blur, depth of field blur: the special effects were painstakingly crafted to accentuate the game's themes of conflict.





Unlike in the previous games, Shadow isn't a police dog. He's his own operative, someone Jack picked up along the way. As Jack earns his respect, Shadow will trust him more, and eventually let Jack pet him.



Punishing Animation

PTOM: I heard there were some real-life injuries in the creation of this game. Want to spill the gory details?

BEN RACKHAM, Animation Manager (Volatile Games): We wanted to ensure the best possible quality, so I personally acted out the moves during our stunt motion capture session. We did not pull punches…so I left the shoot with three cracked ribs.

MITCH BOYER, Producer (Namco Bandai Games): You just can't ask your MOCAP talent to do certain things…so Ben jumped in a MOCAP suit and took that nasty shot to the ribs. We didn't know his ribs were cracked at the time, but he got up and kept going for another hour until he was going to puke. It was only midday when this happened, so I jumped in the monkey suit myself and played punching bag for the rest of the day. I took about 12 consecutive cross stamps to the knee, hammer fists to the neck, and almost dislocated my finger during one of the pistol disarms. We decided to just go for it! Our injuries will heal, but the brutality of the animations is there forever.

First Look Preview

Brütal Legend

By the power of Greyskull! Or the power of whatever dark arts materialize around this devil music!

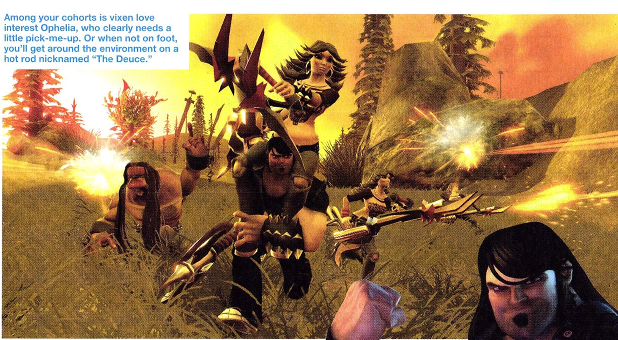
See what that headbangin' nonsense does to you?

PS3 GENRE: Action/adventure AVAILABLE: Q4 PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts DEVELOPER: Double Fine Production

Already, several months before launch, Tim Schafer's next eagerly-anticipated release has traveled an intriguing path on its road to completion. Almost mimicking the tragi-comic route his critically-lauded *Psychonauts* endured, *Brütal Legends* finally found a publishing home when Electronic Arts picked up the challenge after the game fell foul of the Activision/Vivendi merger. (As background, despite garnering initial favorable reaction from the enthusiast press, incumbent publisher Microsoft ditched *Psychonauts* in a portfolio clear-out, and after months in the wilderness it was eventually released by the heroic-though-doomed Majesco, but is considered a borderline classic by all gamers who gave it the time.)

You want to know where you can find more background to Tim Schafer's career, how he got into the industry, and more? Ha ha, yes, in my book, *Rogue Leaders: The Story of LucasArts* (yeah, I did it, I shamelessly got in another plug for my book (available at all good bookstores)).

In fact, it's a little surprising that the game isn't headlined as *"Tim Schafer's Brütal Legend"* such is the cache value of his name among many gamers of all platform predilections. Schafer's resume is brimming with critically adored games, from his work with Ron Gilbert on LucasArts' seminal *Monkey Island* adventure series, to *Full Throttle* and *Grim Fandango.* Then there was *Psychonauts.* And yet, despite adulation from the press, and a dedicated fanboy following, certainly the latter few games failed to set game store registers ringing like



Among your cohorts is vixen love interest Ophelia, who clearly needs a little pick-me-up. Or when not on foot, you'll get around the environment on a hot rod nicknamed "The Deuce."

many (particularly their publishers) expected. Given Activision boss Bobby Kotick's assertion that many of the games the merged company ditched didn't show the potential for yearly "exploitation" with sequels (nice), it's not too surprising that Schafer's latest quirk-filled opus needed a new home. But the new EA, proudly pushing new franchises, has stepped in, and put its industry leading marketing muscle and distribution behind *Brütal Legend.* In the pissing match of corporate mines-bigger-than-yours between ActiBlizzard and EA in recent months, this is one we hope EA can win, because it means that good games won.

So that's why you need to know more about *Brütal Legend,* because, in typical Schafer fashion, it's not an obvious sell. No post-apocalyptic shooter action, cover points, and other buzzwords. *Brütal Legend* is an action adventure inspired by Heavy Metal. Not the plutonium/osmium/lead-type Metal, but Iron Maiden/Judas Priest/Black Sabbath Metal.

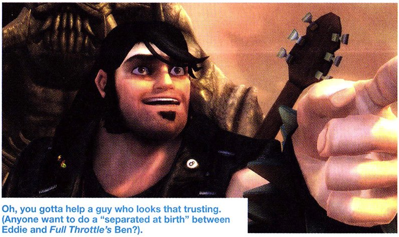
You ready to rock?

Partly inspired by the album covers of those classic vinyl days (if you're too young, kids, ask your dad, uncle, or me) the visual style is that rock fantasy come to life. Playing as Eddie Riggs, a band roadie, you get injured in a freak stage accident during which some of your blood gets into the amulet in his belt that turns out to be magical, with time travel properties. Riggs awakes from his mishap surrounded by a stage that looks, well, real. And the audience? Human remains. Less fazed than he should be, Eddie grabs a weapon, The Separator, and hacks to pieces the demons inhabiting this pit. Good times. Also on hand is Clementine, Eddie's guitar that doubles as a lightning-blasting weapon that when you hit the power chord will send enemies flying (and no, it's not an actual guitar peripheral, you just use the regular controller).

From here the gameplay heads straight into Schafer country. Which means you have to be on your toes (and open-minded) to keep up. Eddie, as a roadie, can fix anything. The Metal gods of this world had the plans for technology, but not the knowledge to put it together. Eddie's guitar riffs, that he cultivates and learns throughout the game, can bring these relics to life. He's joined by a cast of characters that include true Metal gods such as Judas Priest's Rob Halford voicing General Lionwhyte (who's forcing the town's young men to bash the mine walls with their heads because they forgot to bring tools…the, er, tools). The other characters round out an ensemble that should provide the perfect canvas for Schafer's legendary dialogue talents (if *Full Throttle* was any indication, fans are in for a treat).

And it's impossible to ignore the Schafer/Jack Black/Eddie likenesses. Black voices Eddie, and as a gamer himself, according to Schafer, has added even more depth and understanding of Metal culture (and the pieces you can poke fun at). You've got to imagine that several beers with Schafer and Black would likely make your head explode in smart-assery (but we'd be willing to take the risk).

With the explosion of music games, and the popularity of Metal among the *Guitar Hero*/*Rock Band* mob, you've got to think that a music-themed adventure, backed by the kind of style and commentary a Jack Black and Tim Schafer duet can deliver, EA has bought itself a winner. Yeah, this is one we're unabashedly getting behind. We won't be wrong. Rob Smith



Oh, you gotta help a guy who looks that trusting. (Anyone want to do a "separated at birth" between Eddie and *Full Throttle's* Ben?).

X-Men Origins: Wolverine

First Look Preview

The Wolverine you've been waiting for

PS3 **AVAILABLE:** May **GENRE:** Action Adventure **PUBLISHER:** Activision **DEVELOPER:** Raven Software

You've never seen Wolverine like this before. Housed in Hugh Jackman's voice and likeness (slightly bulked up, of course), he freefalls through the air and corpse lands into a jungle clearing. "Corpse lands," as in, claws extended, he uses a rent-a-peon's skull and soft (now blood-splattered) flesh as a personal landing pad. Another baddie unloads bullets into Wolverine's back as he gets to his feet. Snarling, Wolverine turns and leaps, his bullet wounds closing in real time. Glints of metal, and then blood sprays. Two arms tumble to the ground, a dislodged head follows close behind. A swift shove to a final enemy sends a body soaring, straight into a wall of spikes. Sequence after sequence of over-the-top action, all displayed in third-person, *Unreal 3*-driven high definition.

In *X-Men Origins: Wolverine,* Raven Software is forging the videogame industry's first true-to-character Wolverine: he's brooding, lethal, and efficient. In combat, Wolverine's claws are his most prominent tools. Light attacks, heavy attacks, parries, dismemberments, tossing enemies into conveniently placed environmental hazards, and a Quick Kill system are a taste of what Raven promises will be a hefty arsenal of claw-flavored goodies. Wolverine's other notable trait—regeneration—will be visually displayed with technology Raven calls a "gore shader." A layer of skin, a layer of meat, and a skeleton (either bone or adamantium, depending on where in the story you are) will damage and rebuild in real time. Wolverine also possesses a Feral Sense, which can be used to sniff out clues, such as boss weaknesses.

A Wolverine that actually feels as raw and mighty as in the comic? The first reaction is, "Awesome!" But think about it from a gameplay perspective: If Wolverine is all but invincible, where's the risk and reward? Why bother playing? To address that issue, Raven took two routes. First, balance everyday combat with scripted events. Second, make those scripted events mind-bogglingly over-the-top—I'm talking helicopters, flash floods, scuffling with a thousand-foot-tall robot while freefalling through the stratosphere... And of course, environmental puzzles will balance out the pacing.

The story closely follows that of the upcoming Wolverine movie, so Raven is tight-lipped about specifics, but like the title declares, this will be Wolverine's origin story. Within multiple series of flashbacks and time jumps (some which go beyond the film), Raven says to expect to encounter, well, just about every *X-Men* character you'd expect to rub claws with in a Wolverine game. Teresa Dun

Diplomacy may have its charms, but Wolverine prefers his ambassadors sharp, unbreakable, and in packs of threes.

With his Lunge ability, Wolverine will be able to leap across ravines and straight into unsuspecting enemies.

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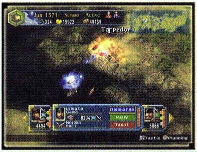
AMBITION BECOMES REALITY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Discharge
Rally
Taunt
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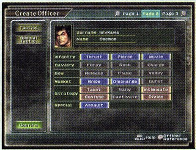
Planning

EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY, GOVERN WISELY, AND BUILD A MILITARY FORCE FOR WAR ON LAND AND AT SEA.


Create Officer
Page 1
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Page 3
Tactics
Special Tactic
Confirm
Help
Officer Reference

Surname Ishikawa
Name Goemon

Infantry	Thrust	Pierce	Impale
Cavalry	Foray	Rush	Charge
Bow	Release	Flame	Volley
Musket	Snipe	Discharge	Burst
Strategy	Taunt	Rally	Intimidate
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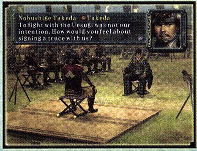

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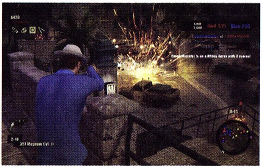
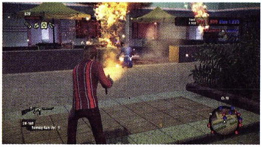
When an enemy is nearly dead in multiplayer, you can finish him off with a weapon-specific execution move. If an ally is near death, you can run over and save him in the exact same manner.



Multiplayer comes complete with a handful of classic arcade features, such as kill streaks.



The weapon selection feels somewhat limited, but the Tommy Gun is all you'll ever really need.

This might sound strange, but one of the game's coolest features is the mini-map on the HUD. Though it looks like a flat, top-down map, it's actually fully 3D. Cool!

The Godfather II

Hands-On Multiplayer

Family Feud, Mafia Style

PS3 AVAILABLE: February GENRE: Action/Strategy PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: EA Redwood Shores

When you're the Don, you've got a lot of responsibility: laundering cash, conquering crime rings, whacking family members—it can be downright stressful! And it can often be difficult to really enjoy the fruits of your labor. Take your family, for instance. *The Godfather II's* strategy-based single-player portion allows you to recruit and upgrade family members in a very RPG-like fashion—granting them special job-specific skills and improving their stats—yet your interactions with them are limited to basic commands.

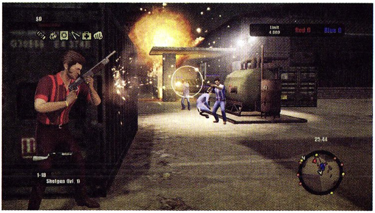
Well, *Godfather II's* multiplayer is here to help. It gives you a chance to take control of any one of your tricked-out henchmen and engage in some traditional third-person shootouts…with a strategic twist! See, not only do your character's single-player stats and upgrades carry over to multiplayer, so do his special abilities. An arsonist in single-player is still an arsonist online, for example, and the game provides plenty of opportunities for him to put his skills to good use.

Demolitions experts can blow holes through certain walls in order to create new paths for their team. Arsonists and engineers can rack up points in the Fire Starter and Safe Cracker match modes by, well, starting fires and cracking safes while the rest of the team provides cover. (Presumably, the game will automatically balance the teams so that each contains an equal of number of arsonists in Fire Starter, for example.) Basically, teams actually have to pool their skills and work together to overcome each map and mode's specific challenges, which creates a unique cooperative dynamic within the game's competitive structure.

And just as your single-player stats impact multiplayer, the rewards you earn in multiplayer transfer back to your single-player game. You not only earn cash that can then be used to improve your character's stats, you gain "honor"—a sort of currency that can be used to upgrade that specific character's weapons licenses. These licenses allow your character to carry more powerful weapons, and the *only* way to obtain them is through online play. Of course, if you don't want to bother playing online, you can always just recruit more powerful family members later in the game and mark the weak ones for death (hey, it's just business).

In my hands-on time, I discovered that *The Godfather II's* multiplayer is much more accessible than it might sound. The run-and-gun gameplay is familiar but fun and surprisingly arcadey—with weapons strewn about the level and players capable of absorbing inhuman amounts of damage before keeling over. The ability to execute or save a wounded player is an especially nice touch. The fairly limited selection of weapons and game modes is something of a letdown, but overall, this could provide a welcome compliment to *The Godfather II's* brainier single-player portion. Scott Butterworth

Action is very run-and-gun, though cover occasionally comes in handy.



Each team member will play a specific role in the overall gameplan. Here, for instance, an arsonist works to ignite a fuel tank while his partners provide cover.

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PlayStation Gallery Updates, sneak peeks, works-in-progress

Guitar Hero: Metallica Hands-On

PS3 AVAILABLE: Spring GENRE: Music PUBLISHER: Activision DEVELOPER: Neversoft

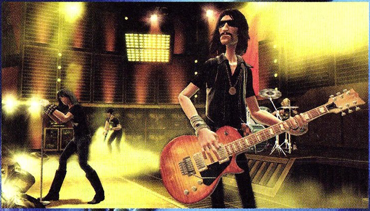
Guitar Hero, post *World Tour*. (Translation: four instruments. Guitar, bass, drums, vocals.) Metallica. Together. Your living room. Need I say more?

Always.

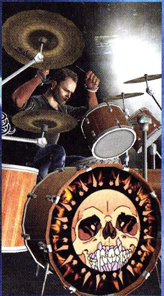
Metallica fans will be delighted at the game's ambition to recreate the experience of a Metallica concert (lighting, special effects, JamesKirkLarsRob's unmistakable presence). *Guitar Hero* fans will be pleased at a new roster of eight-minute-long finger- and tonsil-numbing tracks. *Everyone* will enjoy the physics-powered hair. So touchable, such bounce!

The band was closely involved in the development of *Guitar Hero: Metallica*, from banging out a song list (their list was similar but not identical to Neversoft's…guess whose won?) to spending hours rocking out in a mo-cap studio, clad in figure-hugging bodysuits. They picked their own in-game outfits, too. (Trouble arose when, late in development, Lars casually asked Neversoft to roll up his character's sleeves. His model was already done, and it didn't have actual arms, just clothing with nothing beneath. Some quick forearm construction by Neversoft's adept character model surgeons and whew, crisis averted.) Teresa

ENTER BANDMAN

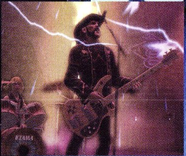


Guitar Hero: Aerosmith told the Aerosmith story, from humble roots to worldwide fame. Imagine playing Metallica's song list chronologically… Goodbye, gentle difficulty slope. Hello, frustration. So instead, *GH: Metallica* will tell a new story. Your story. Inspired by a Metallica concert (yes, you play it), you decide to start a band. As you trudge your way to fame, babes (or studs), and riches, your band opens for Metallica, all the while competing with an '80s glam band called The Poseurs. This way, your progression through Career mode (and Metallica's range of songs) is much smoother.



BEYOND BASS-ICS

Lars is an insane drummer, with his double bass pedals. Too insane for Expert mode. Just for him (and people who want to mimic him), Neversoft created the Expert Plus mode, which incorporates both bass pedals and eye dizzying note tracks. You'll be able to purchase the second pedal and plug it into your existing *World Tour* drum set when *GH: Metallica* is released.



LEMMY ROCK YA

Legendary Motörhead vocalist and bassist, Lemmy Kilmister, will make an appearance. Lemmy's enduring take on his group: "We only know four chords, but we know them very well."

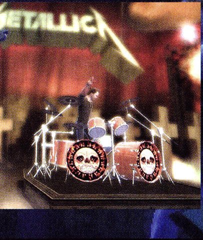
THE SET LIST

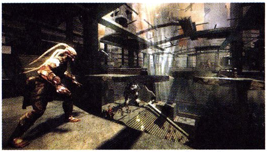
Four instruments; approximately 45 songs (with the Death Magnetic *GH: World Tour* DLC compatible as well). The list so far:

Foo Fighters - Stacked Actors
Alice In Chains - No Excuses
Bob Seger - Turn The Page
Judas Priest - Hell Bent For Leather
Kyuss - Demon Cleaner
Lynyrd Skynyrd - Tuesdays Gone
Mastodon - Blood And Thunder
Metallica - Enter Sandman
Metallica - For Whom The Bell Tolls
Metallica - Fuel
Metallica - Hit The Lights
Metallica - King Nothing
Metallica - Master of Puppets
Metallica - No Leaf Clover
Metallica - Nothing Else Matters
Metallica - Sad But True
Metallica - The Unforgiven
Metallica - Wherever I May Roam
Metallica - The Shortest Straw
Metallica - Whiplash
Michael Schenker Group - Armed and Ready
Samhain - Mother of Mercy
The Sword - Black River
System of a Down - Toxicity
Metallica - The Memory Remains
Motörhead - Ace of Spades

METADATA

Don't feel like playing? Listen to full Metallica songs and watch the virtual band pounce around the stage instead. "Metallifacts" scrawled across the screen throughout tracks reveal trivia about the songs and the band.





Stormrise Hands-On

PS3 AVAILABLE: March GENRE: Real-time Strategy PUBLISHER: SEGA DEVELOPER: The Creative Assembly

"RTSs on consoles equal fail!" The words rang so true, but were shocking coming from a real-time strategy game developer's mouth. However, the Creative Assembly folks did supplement the statement with, "Until now..." as they placed the controller in my hands. And lo and behold, the Fog of Futility we normally associate with RTSs that wander away from the PC's keyboard-and-mouse-controlled confines lifted. *Stormrise's* innovative Whip Select control system works, with a mere point-and-release of the analog stick propelling you to the desired unit whether they're in plain view or clear across the level. Command and control inputs are so smooth and simple that gameplay soon becomes a blur of split-second battlefield decisions. Combined with the close-in play perspective and the verticality of the environments, the entire experience feels more like a first-person shooter with brains than a traditional RTS. Feel free to begin laughing at your PC friends now. Roger

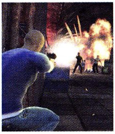
Wheelman Update

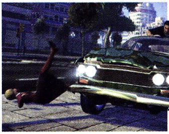
PS3 AVAILABLE: February GENRE: Driving/Action PUBLISHER: Midway DEVELOPER: Midway Newcastle/ Tigon Studios

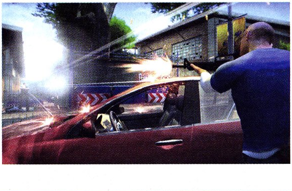
It's easy to focus on Vin Diesel's pecs and mirthless mug, and not notice that *Wheelman* is stock full of stupid fun. If you can electrify yourself into an undiscerning stupor, the relentless cinematic action and "Vehicle Melee" should carry you happily through 30-odd hours of gameplay.

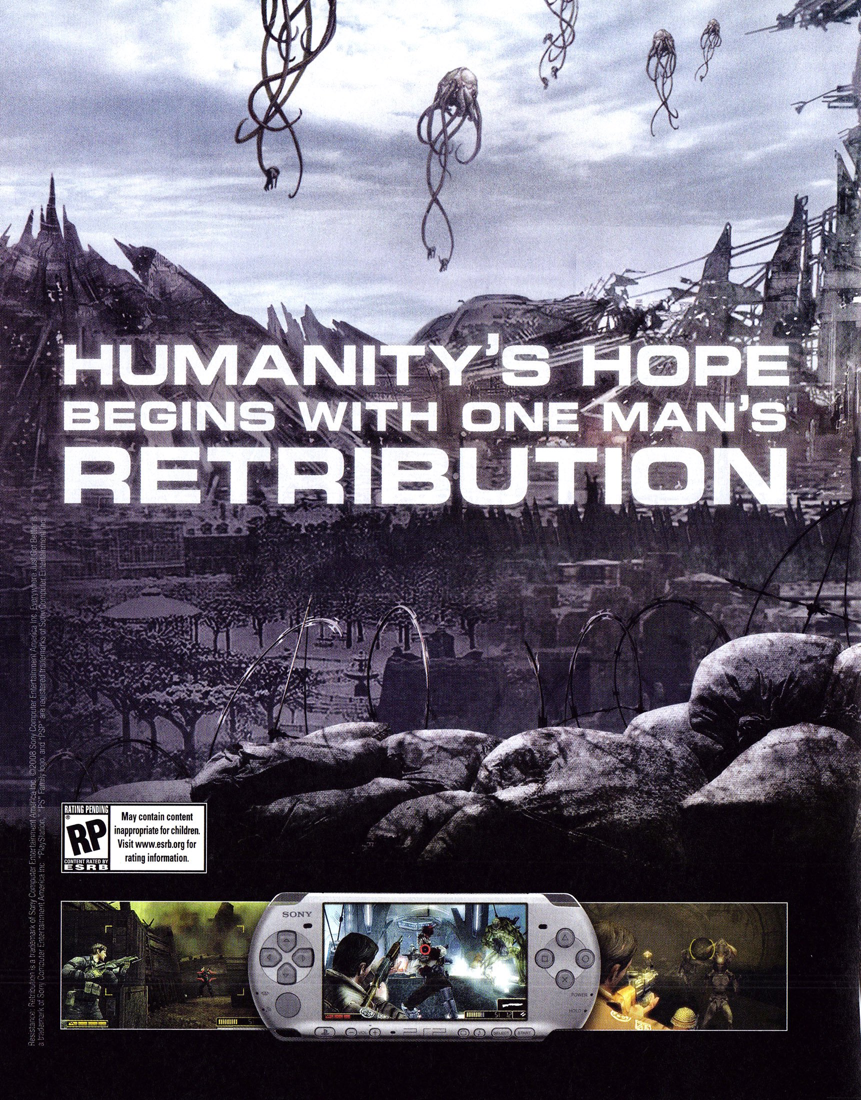
You'll be able to earn "focus" by popping wheelies on a motorbike or by drifting and colliding with street furniture in a car, and then use that focus to boost your speed or slow time while you shoot your gun out of the window. One of the more unfeasible stunts is swinging your car 180-degrees, shooting the tires, radiator, and face of the guy who's following you, flipping another 180, and driving off.

Wheelman might not go down in history as the most thoughtful title ever, but it may be remembered for making Vin Diesel acceptable again. Simon





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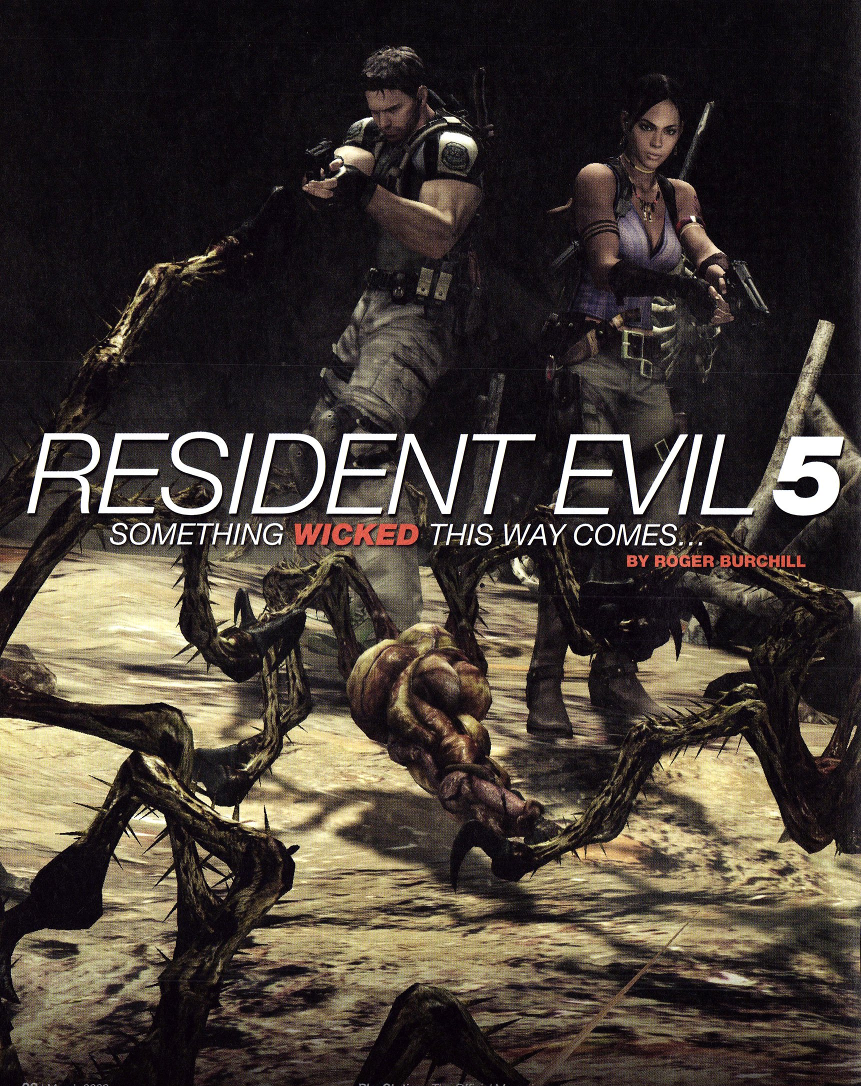


RESIDENT EVIL 5

SOMETHING **WICKED** THIS WAY COMES...

BY ROGER BURCHILL

Platform: PS3

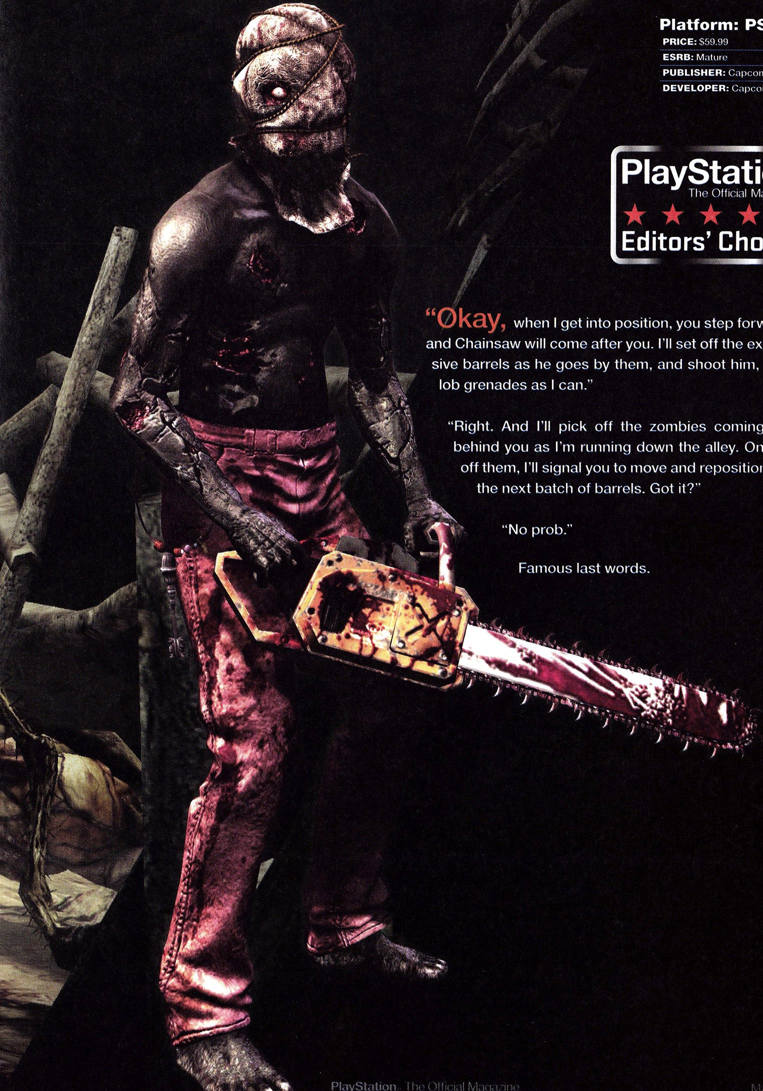
PRICE: $59.99

ESRB: Mature

PUBLISHER: Capcom

DEVELOPER: Capcom

PlayStation
The Official Magazine
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Editors' Choice



"Okay, when I get into position, you step forward and Chainsaw will come after you. I'll set off the explosive barrels as he goes by them, and shoot him, and lob grenades as I can."

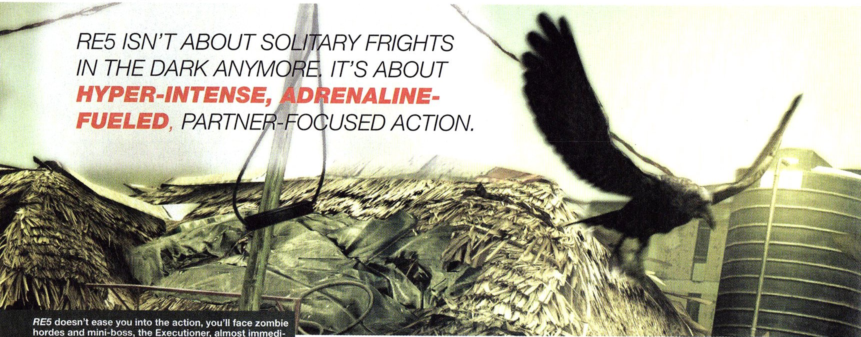
"Right. And I'll pick off the zombies coming up behind you as I'm running down the alley. Once I off them, I'll signal you to move and reposition for the next batch of barrels. Got it?"

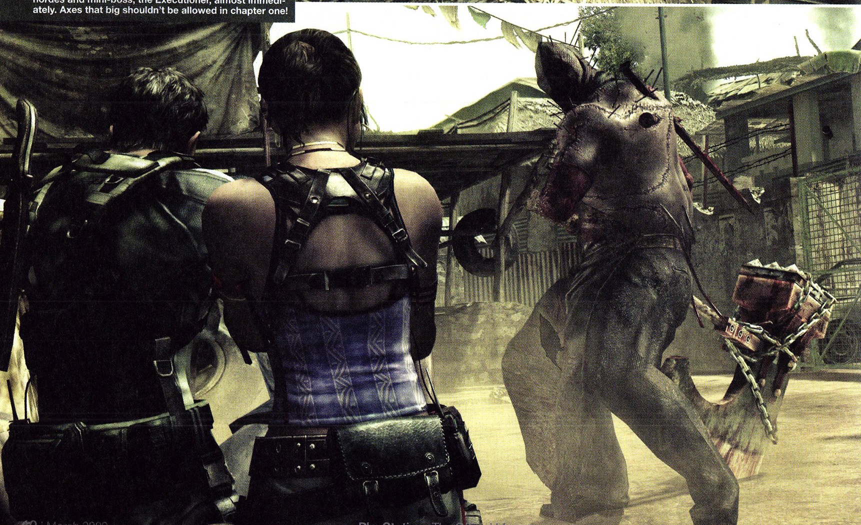
"No prob."

Famous last words.

Every game has that one section that just pisses you off. It's not necessarily the hardest or most challenging part of the game; it's just the part that has your number. First come the rationalizations: You're just getting a feel for the sit-rep; you're just figuring out what the game wants you to do. Then, the muttering: "Aww, I can't believe I did that!" or "C'mon man... Focus!" It's about the time when your reloads enter double-digit territory that the diatribe of "WTF!?" and other various developer-aimed, expletive-laden epithets begin to flow.

RE5 ISN'T ABOUT SOLITARY FRIGHTS IN THE DARK ANYMORE. IT'S ABOUT **HYPER-INTENSE, ADRENALINE-FUELED**, *PARTNER-FOCUSED ACTION.*





RE5 **doesn't ease you into the action, you'll face zombie hordes and mini-boss, the Executioner, almost immediately. Axes that big shouldn't be allowed in chapter one!**

For fellow PTOM editor Scott Butterworth and myself, the game scenario from hell arrived on day one of our exclusive three-day playtest of the finished *Resident Evil 5.* Ensconced deep within the bowels of Capcom USA's offices, fighting co-op for our survival-horror lives, we gained new insight into each other's psyche and established a communication flow uncommon among work peers—with language frowned upon by HR departments.

"Why the [bleep] did you explode the barrel when I'm standing next to it!?"

"Why the [bleep bleep] did you stop?"

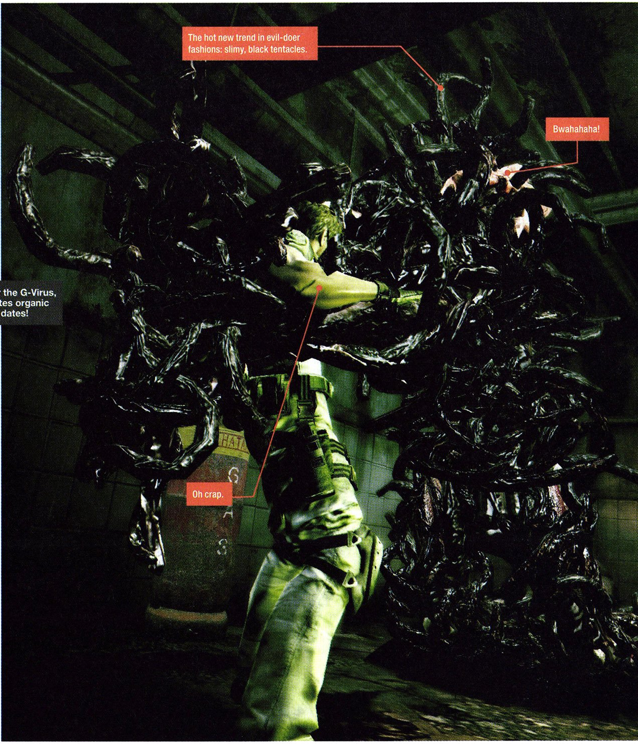
"I was being [bleepin' bleep bleep] attacked!!!"

"Dude! You were supposed to keep moving. If I don't shoot the [bleepin'] barrel, Chainsaw gets through the blast zone without a scratch!"

"I was being [bleepin' bleep bleep] attacked!!!"

"Don't worry about the other zombies! Just keep moving! [Bleep.]"

"Alright, alright. Let's just do it again. [Bleep.]"


The hot new trend in evil-doer fashions: slimy, black tentacles.

Bwahahaha!

Oh crap.

More powerful than either the T-Veronica or the G-Virus, the latest Progenitor Virus strain reconstitutes organic matter into a mass of tentacles. Perfect for dates!

Looking back, it should have been much easier. There are plenty of sequences later in the game that are much more demanding, much more challenging. And yet, we'd prevail with nowhere near the same level of interpersonal drama. But that Chainsaw encounter encapsulated something—a shift in the beloved *Resident Evil* dynamic, if you will: *RE5* isn't about solitary frights in the dark anymore. It's about hyper-intense, adrenaline-fueled, partner-focused action. This *Evil* will keep you talking during the game, and more importantly, after.

"Dude, are you seeing this?! Sweet..."

As returning (and reluctant) *Resident Evil* and *Resident Evil: Code: Veronica* hero Chris Redfield, you meet up with fellow BSAA (Bioterrorism Security Assessment Alliance) agent and new partner, Sheva Alomar in the fictional West African coastal city of Kijuju. A cutscene flashback reveals that Chris is haunted by the death of longtime partner, Jill Valentine. He's weary and conflicted about the seemingly endless battle against bioterrorists and other nefarious biohazard threats. Although unsure about whether he's ready for or even wants a new partner, Chris quiets his inner doubts and demons with a steely resolve to see the job through. The threat of the moment are terrorists taking advantage of a destabilized African government to develop biological weapons, but it soon becomes evident that the threads of the past haven't disentangled and are instead intricately woven into the present crisis.

From the cinematic opening credits that set the scenario to your first in-game steps onto the dingy dirt streets of Kijuju, you're immediately struck by *RE5's* stunning level of detail and breathtaking visuals. Perhaps it's the way Chris squints his eyes from the harsh glare of the midday African sun or how the Sheva's skin exhibits a moist perspiration-induced glow from the overbearing heat, but the game's graphics manage to convey an actual sense of immersion in the environment. *You* squint your eyes, *your* mouth dries out, *you* feel the sapping effects of the oppressive heat.

You will immediately notice (and *Resident Evil* traditionalists will bristle at) the absence of the franchise's trademark horror movie atmosphere and its inherent dark, moody settings. But even as you trek across ➔

RE5 TAKES THE CO-OP EXPERIENCE TO A NEW LEVEL AND **REINVIGORATES THE SURVIVAL HORROR GENRE** IN THE PROCESS.

town in broad daylight for your first meeting with a local operative, the lack of smiles or any form of friendly interaction from the locals still manages to instill a sense of tension and creepiness. The locals go about their business—even a gang of thugs brutalizing someone covered with a sack—but there seems to be a simmering malice and everyone eyes you with suspicion as you walk by. This unsettling facade of peacefulness, artificial though it may be, lasts just long enough for Chris and Sheva to receive their first bit of intel from their contact.

And then...the situation simply explodes.

"Man, aiming is a lot easier now... Okay, stop shooting, and just RUN!"

Your first encounter with zombies illuminates the gameplay evolution that *RE5* embodies. The franchise's deliberate (some would even say slow-paced) encounters with the living dead have been replaced by a harried and relentless pacing. Sure, the typical plodding zombies lumber into your gun sights, but you also have to handle smarter, faster forms. Focus on one type too much and you're certain to be consumed by another variant from the swarming horde. And if the seemingly endless supply of run-of-the-mill enemies isn't enough, expect a brutally efficient mini-boss to show up and complicate your tactical plans. It feels like you're channeling *The Fellowship of the Ring* at times, fighting off orcs in the mines of Moria, only to discover, "They have a Cave Troll!" And you can bet that a Balrog equivalent will show up eventually.

Every time an action sequence is initiated (and accompanied by the persistent, pounding soundtrack) you'll do a quick bit of mental arithmetic to gauge your ammo to enemy ratio. More often than not, you'll come out on the negative side of that equation, and the urge to fight is quickly supplanted by the need for flight. But for all of its beautiful and sometimes expansive environments, you'll find that escape is a mere illusion. Alleyways become dead ends, front doorways allow opportunities to explore buildings but the back doorway deposits you back onto an adjoining street, the neighboring rooftop is just a bit too distant to jump, and so it goes. Running may sometimes earn you a respite or an opportunity to locate needed supplies (scattered about or hidden in crates and barrels), but *RE5* cunningly funnels you back into the fray—or more aptly, into the clutches of another dead head.

Gamers used to open world environments like *Grand Theft Auto IV* may find *Resident Evil 5's* world brutishly limiting, but the tightly designed and restricted environments deliver a smart, orchestrated play progression with more consistent gameplay payoffs. There's a welcome absence of aimless wandering in *RE5,* and any downtime usually means that the game is setting you up for its next big adrenaline rush.

Perhaps *Resident Evil 5's* most

Sheva Alomar 411

AGE: 23
PROFESSION: Smiter of Evil
GAMES THAT GOT YOU INTO GAMING: Anything on a GameBoy, especially *Tetris.*
FIRST JOB: University student then straight into the BSAA. Although I did work part-time at Taco Bell during high school.
MOST FORMATIVE LIFE EVENT: The death of my parents in a factory "accident."

Chris Redfield 411

AGE: 35
PROFESSION: Reluctant hero who often feels like zombie fodder.
GAMES THAT GOT YOU INTO GAMING: *Resident Evil* and *Resident Evil: Code: Veronica,* of course.
FIRST JOB: Boy Band member and then a stint in the U.S. Air Force.
MOST FORMATIVE LIFE EVENT: Jill. My partner... the loss of my partner...my ex-partner, Jill Valentine.

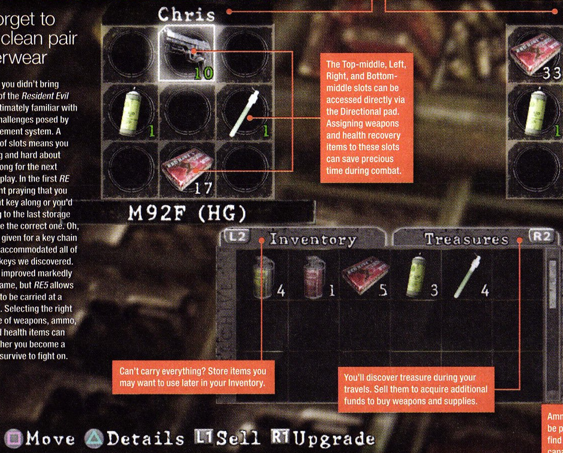
Sheva isn't just beautiful, she's smart and tough. Have her press the attack or cover your advance, but learning to coordinate and cooperate with her is key.

ITEM MANAGEMENT

Don't forget to pack a clean pair of underwear

"Whattya mean you didn't bring any?!" Any fan of the *Resident Evil* series will be intimately familiar with the particular challenges posed by the item management system. A limited number of slots means you better think long and hard about what to bring along for the next stretch of gameplay. In the first *RE* game, this meant praying that you brought the right key along or you'd be backtracking to the last storage locker to retrieve the correct one. Oh, what we'd have given for a key chain that could have accommodated all of the mysterious keys we discovered.

Matters have improved markedly since the first game, but *RE5* allows only nine items to be carried at a time per person. Selecting the right mix and balance of weapons, ammo, body armor, and health items can determine whether you become a zombie treat or survive to fight on.



Remember, you've got a partner, and the ability to exchange items (except firearms). Carefully consider and discuss your weapon loadouts and take advantage of the 18 slots between both of you.

The Top-middle, Left, Right, and Bottom-middle slots can be accessed directly via the Directional pad. Assigning weapons and health recovery items to these slots can save precious time during combat.

You'll likely find more weapons than you'll be able to carry. Determine which ones offer the most damage potential while complimenting your particular play style. Scott preferred the punch of his trusty shotgun, while Roger loves the Grenade Launcher so much that he sleeps with it now.

Can't carry everything? Store items you may want to use later in your Inventory.

You'll discover treasure during your travels. Sell them to acquire additional funds to buy weapons and supplies.

Ammo (except grenade launcher rounds) can't be purchased, so you'll need to hoard all you find during your adventures. But upgrading the capacity of your weapons is a great way to store rounds without sacrificing vital slot real estate.

remarkable achievement is how it deftly straddles the line between the franchise's sometimes endearing, sometimes frustrating, legacy gameplay mechanics while incorporating more contemporary action adventure elements like enhanced interaction and exploration of environments and a decidedly more shooter-like control scheme. In fact, there's a segment that requires you to explore and battle your way through ancient ruins that wouldn't seem out of place in a *Tomb Raider* game, while in another section you infiltrate a heavily defended research facility in an undeniable tip of the hat to *Metal Gear Solid.* Such "tributes" could have easily diluted the *Resident Evil* survival horror experience, but it deftly retains its mood by allowing just enough freedom to make the puppet strings seem invisible before unleashing some scripted bit of terror that will likely eviscerate you in a matter of seconds—at least the first time you face it. You'll be cursing while somewhere developers will be smugly laughing, but you can't help but savor the new brew.

The further refinement of the control system overhaul that began in *Resident Evil 4* is central to the shift towards action adventure style play. While *RE5* still resists conversion to a pure shooter mechanism, you can now strafe, and while panning with your weapon isn't exactly fast, it's no longer insufferably slow. Some control peculiarities do remain, such as the inability to walk or run while firing your weapon, and if ducking behind cover seems like a reasonable combat tactic when facing zombies that can throw axes, toss dynamite, or fire automatic weapons, well forget it—there's no crouching in *RE5* unless you're in the rare area where it's designed into the scenario. Still, the overall effect of the new control refinements is a smoother, less frustrating play experience without the robotic movements that have been a hallmark of the series for most of its existence. But if you're still resistant to change, there's a wide latitude of control setup options that will let you tune in a good amount of the traditional *Resident Evil* control feel.

The pretty ones always manage to get past your defenses. Pass on firearms when your admirers get this close and grab that machete for melee attacks instead.

> FOR ALL OF ITS BEAUTIFUL AND SOMETIMES EXPANSIVE ENVIRONMENTS, YOU'LL FIND THAT **ESCAPE IS A MERE ILLUSION**.

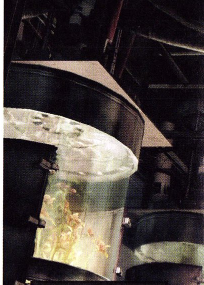
"This is like playing an Indiana Jones movie. And not the crappy ones."

A compelling continuing storyline, exceptionally high production values, improved controls—*Resident Evil 5* is the best of the franchise breed based on those factors alone. But it's the co-operative play (with either the AI-controlled Sheva in single-player mode or, preferably, the two-player online mode) and the uncanny sense of rhythm intrinsic in the game's co-op play and the overall structural pacing that distinguish *RE5* part and parcel beyond its progenitors.

Frankly, co-operative play is a revelation. *Resistance 2* probably ranks as the best co-op game in recent memory and *Army of Two* had its moments, but *RE5* takes the co-op experience to a new level and reinvigorates the survival horror genre in the process. It's a credit to the developers that the AI-controlled Sheva works as well as she does. You'll quickly become accustomed to instructing her to press an attack or offer covering fire, performing the occasional co-op jump, and negotiating co-op required switch puzzles, but two-player co-op is where the experience truly comes alive.

Much like a real-life partnership, you start the game feeling out your buddy's play style and capabilities while gingerly exploring just what strategic and tactical effect the teamwork mechanism has on gameplay. (See the Top Co-op sidebar for the breakdown on, or should I say of, my partnership with Scott.) Once you fully assimilate the parameters of co-op play, a satisfying rhythm develops between partners that will have you pointing out targets and communicating battlefield tactics on the fly. The real fun begins when your best-laid plans start to disintegrate: will you be the cause of your partner's demise or will you swoop in and administer that health spray just in time to save your mate (and actually, reinvigorate both of you.) It's amazing how instinctual the process becomes by the end of the game as communication exchanges condense to clipped phrases and the odd guttural utterance that would have been nonsensical several hours prior. But it's the sometimes-heated verbal exchanges that co-op play inspires that are the stuff of memories. You'll still be recounting *RE5* stories with your friend for years to come. Hopefully… Once everyone calms down.

Rhythm is an attribute that's inherent to *Resident Evil 5's* gameplay structure as well. If *RE5* were one long gore-filled trigger fest like the majority of shooters, the gratifying co-op interplay would likely not develop. But *RE5* does a great job of mixing gameplay styles to create a sense of pacing that flows between high-octane shootouts to more subdued but eerie exploratory sequences. One moment you'll be blasting and hacking away at zombie mobs and face off against some seemingly invincible mini-boss in the midst of town, or you'll be systematically exploring working your way through the dark, claustrophobic confines of a mine or the labyrinthine corridors



Executioner 411

AGE: Unknown
PROFESSION: Executioner
GAMES THAT GOT YOU INTO GAMING: *Golden Axe*…but new one sucks.
FIRST JOB: Barber's apprentice…but that was… bad…move.
FAVORITE HORROR MOVIE: *So I Married an Axe Murderer* "Not..really…horror, but… Executioner…need… love…too. And Scottish… grandpa…sooo funny. 'We have…piper down… repeat…piper is down!' Class…ic."

TOP CO-OP

There's no "die" in team

ROB: Chris Redfield didn't have to go it alone, so we didn't think Roger should have to either. That's why Scott accompanied Roger on his journey through the far reaches of *Resident Evil 5's* zombie-infested Africa, filling the role of sidekick Sheva Alomar. How did our two intrepid editors enjoy spending three solid days crammed into a room together? More importantly, how did they enjoy the game? And will their relationship ever be the same again?

SCOTT: You might think playing through a *Resident Evil* game with a partner would practically ruin the experience, but the truth is, it simply changes it. While the idea of never being alone will likely offend survival-horror purists, those who can keep an open mind are in for some exceptionally well-executed cooperative action ranging from assisted jumps to environmental puzzles to resource sharing (although it was disturbing that Roger referred to the close proximity required for health spray sharing as "snuggling").

ROGER: We quickly found unique ways to conquer each of the game's unique scenarios. You're afforded a great deal of freedom to strategize as you see fit, which offers an incredibly welcome break from the forced and essentially meaningless cooperative portions of some other games. It became standard operating procedure to survey the field of battle and point out elements that can be used for tactical advantage. And trust me, planning on the fly (which is to say, while being mauled by zombies) is an absolute thrill, even if Scott's comprehension skills are limited (and vocabulary colorful, blue in particular).

SCOTT: We were also able to thoroughly scour each room with ruthless efficiency. No item was safe from our terrible seeking! And since we divided up the weapons by type (with Roger taking automatics and explosives and myself wielding shotguns and sniper rifles), we inadvertently carved out unique, specialized roles for ourselves, which gave us clear sense of purpose and a surprisingly strong dependence on one another. In other words, Roger would have been toast without me.

ROGER: By the end, we ran like a well-oiled zombie-killing machine. We definitely had a few tense moments (typically, when Scott started yelling at me to kill things faster), but overall, I can't imagine playing this game any other way. In fact, it's going to be tough going back to single-player games now, even though the AI version of Sheva would probably analyze, play, and smell better than Scott.

ROB: Sounds like you guys had a, er, great time. What did you learn about each other from the experience?

SCOTT: Roger's old and slow, but he has just enough gaming skills left to not be completely useless.

ROGER: Scott's a [expletive]-ing uber-spaz that, if inserted into the game, would make zombies flee in terror.

ROB: All right then, sounds like there's no further need for team-building activities in this year's budget. Back to work you two!

The fun doesn't end when you complete *RE5's* main storyline. We're sworn to secrecy, but we've had a peek at an unlockable mode and forthcoming DLC, and it's awesome.

Chainsaw 411
AGE: Unknown
PROFESSION: Guard
GAMES THAT GOT YOU INTO GAMING: An old '80s arcade game called *Timber.*
FIRST JOB: Lumberjack
FAVORITE HORROR MOVIE: *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* "Man, that flick's how it all started. Before that, Chainsaw was like a zombie without direction. But when Chainsaw saw *Massacre,* everything *snap* came into focus. Chainsaw went straight down to the hardware store and the rest is his-story!"

of some secret research complex, experience a brief but hair-raising quick-time event, and be back to fighting zombies—but this time racing across the savannah manning the chain gun mounted on the back of a Humvee. Ahhh…variety is the spice of life—and of *RE5.*

"We have so got to play this again."

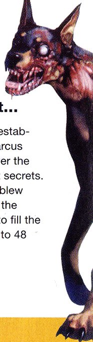
If there's any quibbling to be done about *Resident Evil 5,* it's that much of the game content and scenarios are derivative. You'll recognize "influences" from *Matrix, Indiana Jones, Star Wars, Metal Gear, Tomb Raider,* and probably every monster-related vehicle ever made, but it's the way that *RE5* reinterprets, reconstitutes, and just plain re-uses them that distinguishes the game. You won't care that *RE5* takes hits in the originality category because you'll be having too much fun to care. Besides, when's the last time you watched or played a zombie-anything to experience the avant-garde?

In fact, if *RE5* were a zombie movie, it would be like the next *28 Days* sequel where plodding zombies are long gone, replaced by the new quick and relentless variety, but now smarter and even armed to the rotting teeth. It's the veritable Hollywood blockbuster infused with big-budget hype that's certain to outrage the purists who don't want their genre super-sized and violated. And it wouldn't matter because somewhere along the way it became a spectacle that couldn't be ignored—everyone would see it anyway and be blown away.

It's exactly the type of event you have to share with a buddy, so you can discuss, dissect, and deliberate over it for days to come. And then you'd fork over another 10 spot and experience it all over again.

The good news is that this game is that good. Hours after playing through *RE5* once, I'm already thinking about different strategies, loadouts, and approaches to the game scenarios. And I'm certain that I didn't discover everything in there. Shoot, the game said we'd only completed 23-percent of the game after we'd defeated it. Yes, something wicked this way comes…and I'm ready to play it all over again. How about it, Scott? Are you up for another go around as well? It might help you work through your anger management issues.

★★★★★



A Time for [Resident] Evil

It's a mystery wrapped in a riddle cloaked in an enigma! And here's the timeline to prove it...

Ever since it unleashed the original *Resident Evil,* Capcom has been fleshing out the saga of the T-Virus with enough absurd twists and overblown villains to make *Prison Break* look like a this-is-how-it-really-is documentary. We've pieced together information left in diaries, memos, and files by those involved in the creation of the virus and the victims of its mutagenic effects to unravel all the important events in the *Res*-universe. We've only included games and events that are considered canon, though. So that means no *Outbreak* and just two of the *Survivor* outings.

Central to the whole story is the Umbrella Corporation, established by Edward Ashford, Ozwell Spencer, and James Marcus in 1968 to fund their research into the Progenitor Virus. Over the subsequent 30 years the trio's experiments were well-kept secrets. That is, until the T-Virus outbreak in Raccoon City in 1998 blew the lid off their nightmarish research into bio-weapons. As the Umbrella empire crumbled, other organizations appeared to fill the void, providing a constant stream of viral horror. So here's to 48 years of zombies, and counting...

SO IT BEGINS...

1960 Edward Ashford and Ozwell E. Spencer discover a mutagenic virus that they name the Progenitor Virus. James Marcus begins work on how to enhance it to create biological weapons.

1962 Spencer commissions architect George Trevor to build a mansion for him in the remote Arklay Mountains.

1967 A year after the mansion is completed, George Trevor visits Spencer in his new residence. Unbeknownst to Trevor, his wife Jessica and daughter Lisa, who'd travelled ahead, have been used as viral test subjects by Spencer. Jessica shows no reaction to the Type A virus. Lisa, however, reacts violently to a Type B strain, mutates rapidly and goes insane, ripping her mother's face off, believing her to be an impostor. Trevor is imprisoned and dies within the mansion's walls, eventually becoming a Crimson Head—an evolved strain of zombie with long nails.

1968 The Umbrella Corporation is created by Spencer to act as a front for his research. Ashford, who wants to use the virus for good, is accidentally infected by his son Alexander and dies. Alexander inherits the estate.

Umbrella

1969 Alexander Ashford begins work on his own research facility in the Antarctic. Much later this becomes a part of the ever-expanding Umbrella Corporation.

1971 Alexander Ashford researches genetically enhanced intelligence, cloning two "children" from the DNA of great, great grandmother Veronica Ashford: Alfred (normal intelligence) and Alexia (super genius).

1977 Albert Wesker and William Birkin start at the Umbrella training academy. James Marcus combines leech DNA with the Progenitor Virus to create the Tyrant or T-Virus. He's frustrated that he can only use animals for testing. Birkin begins experiments using the newly discovered Ebola virus.

1981 The first T-Virus zombies are created while Birkin fuses reptilian DNA with a T-Virus-infected human embryo to create the first Hunter. Alexia Ashford becomes the senior researcher at Umbrella's Rockfort Training Facility. She's 10 years old.

1983 **Resident Evil: CODE: Veronica**
Alfred Ashford learns that both his sister and he were "born" from their father's experiments. In retaliation they use him as a guinea pig for Alexia's T-Veronica virus, created by crossing the Progenitor virus with an older strain found in queen ants. Alexander mutates into a creature called Nosferatu and is imprisoned under the Arctic research facility. Alexia discovers that a lengthy, low temperature gestation period enables a viral host to mutate without losing higher brain functions. She infects herself and enters cryo-stasis for 15 years.

1988 Acting on Spencer's orders, Birkin and Wesker assassinate James Marcus, dump his body and assume the roles of lead researchers working on creating a Tyrant—an intelligent T-Virus monster. Unfortunately only one in 10 million people have the correct genetic code for "successful" infection, severely limiting progress. They inject Lisa Trevor with the NE-Alpha or Nemesis parasite, an offshoot of the T-Virus. She absorbs it and generates the first strain of Gene or G-Virus.

1991 The Nemesis Project begins, attempting to combine a NE-Alpha parasite with a Tyrant.

S.T.A.R.S. RACCOON DEP POLICE

1997 Barry Burton and Chris Redfield join the new S.T.A.R.S. (Special Tactics And Rescue) police task force founded by Albert Wesker in 1996. Soldier Billy Coen is arrested and sentenced to death after a botched U.S. Army operation overseas ends in the massacre of 23 innocent African villagers.

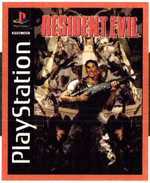
1998 May 27
The Raccoon Times reports an unusual killing in the Arklay Mountains.

1998 July 23 | **Resident Evil Zero**
Billy and Rebecca defeat James Marcus, escape the exploding research facility and go their separate ways—Billy into the forest and Rebecca to the apparent safety of a scary looking mansion. William Birkin returns to the Raccoon City research lab to work on the G-Virus, while Wesker continues to send S.T.A.R.S. teams up against Umbrella's bio-weapons to collect the data.

1998 July – Aug.
Chris becomes increasingly frustrated at the lack of action by Raccoon Police Chief Brian Irons despite the Spencer mansion incident and the growing number of T-Virus victims. Chris eventually leaves the city to infiltrate Umbrella's European headquarters.

SPAWN OF THE DEAD

1996



Resident Evil PSone

1998

Resident Evil 2 PSone

1999

Resident Evil 3: Nemesis PSone

1998 Sept. 29 | **Resident Evil 2**
Claire Redfield arrives in Raccoon City to look for her brother Chris, just as rookie cop Leon Kennedy arrives for his first day on the force. Claire finds William Birkin's daughter Sherry abandoned, and learns that an improved Tyrant is on the loose. Leon meets Ada Wong, who claims to be looking for her boyfriend. Leon and Claire converge on Birkin's lab and discover the Tyrant is after a sample of G-Virus in Sherry's pendant. They fight a mutated Birkin, killing him.

Raccoon City
City Limits
POP. ...200

1998 July 24-25 | **Resident Evil**
After losing contact with the S.T.A.R.S. Bravo team, the Alpha team—Albert Wesker, Barry Burton, Chris Redfield, and Jill Valentine—find Bravo team's downed chopper. They're attacked by a pack of MA-39 Cerberus (zombie dogs) and flee into the Spencer mansion. Valentine and Burton find three Bravo team members zombified, pecked, and poisoned, respectively. Chris finds Rebecca Chambers alive, well, and cute. Jill and Chris also learn that a member of their own team is a traitor. Suspicion falls on Burton due to Wesker holding his family hostage to guarantee his compliance. When he's revealed as the Umbrella agent, Wesker releases a Tyrant, only to be killed by his own creation. However, he has actually injected himself with an unknown virus to fake his death. Jill defeats the Tyrant and along with the surviving S.T.A.R.S. members heads to Raccoon City.

1998 Sept. 22 | **Resident Evil 2**
Umbrella sends in a team lead by agent Hunk to infiltrate William Birkin's lab and retrieve a sample of the G-Virus. Birkin is fatally wounded but injects himself with G-Virus, mutates, and slaughters Hunk's team as they try to escape via the sewers. Shattered vials of the T-Virus infect rats, starting the Raccoon City outbreak.

1998 July 22 | **Resident Evil**
S.T.A.R.S. Bravo team is sent out to investigate a series of grisly cannibalistic murders in the Arklay Mountains. Their helicopter is forced to crash land and zombies attack the team. Young medic Rebecca Chambers meets military prisoner Billy Coen who's on the run after his prison van was attacked by the undead. Forming an alliance they make their way to the Arklay Research Facility to discover James Marcus, reanimated by his own mutant leeches.

1998 Sept. 28 | **Resident Evil 3: Nemesis**
The Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service (UBCS) enters Raccoon City. Brad Vickers informs Jill Valentine that Umbrella has released a Nemesis bio-weapon into the city with the express aim of killing S.T.A.R.S. members. After escaping from the mutant assassin, Jill meets a unit of UBCS including Carlos Oliveira with whom she works to find a means of escape. Making their way to the Raccoon Clock Tower, Jill signals for a chopper only for Nemesis to shoot it down. In the ensuing battle, Jill is infected by the T-Virus and blacks out. Carlos carries her to safety.

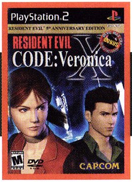
1998 Sept. 30 | **Resident Evil 2**
Claire discovers her brother has headed to Europe and sets out to find him. Leon strikes a deal with the U.S. government to ensure Sherry's safety, but she still falls into Wesker's hands. Hunk escapes Raccoon City with a sample of G-Virus, as does Ada Wong who delivers it to Wesker, now working for one of Umbrella's rivals.

1998 Oct. 1 | **Resident Evil 3: Nemesis**
Carlos manages to discover a vaccine in the Raccoon City Hospital and cures Jill of her T-Virus infection. They soon discover the government is planning to nuke Raccoon City. More pressing matters include the rampaging Nemesis and Carlos' sinister UBSC teammate Nicholai Ginovaef, who has been investigating the T-Virus cure known as Daylight. After dispensing of both with a rail gun and rocket launcher respectively, Jill and Carlos are rescued by Barry Burton in a chopper as the nuclear strike incinerates the city.

2000

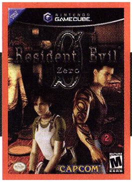
Resident Evil: Survivor PSone

2001



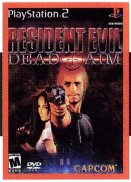
RE: CODE: Veronica PS2

2002



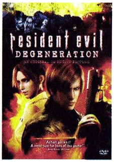
Resident Evil Zero GameCube

2003



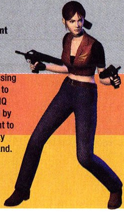
Resident Evil: Dead Aim PS2

SO IT CONTINUES…



1998 Nov. 25-26 | **Resident Evil Survivor**
Anti-Umbrella agent Ark Thompson loses his memory in a helicopter crash on Sheena Island. While trying to discover his identity, he destroys an Umbrella research center specialising in Tyrant development under the supervision of Vincent Goldman.

1998 Dec. 17 | **Resident Evil: CODE: Veronica**
Claire Redfield, still searching for the whereabouts of her missing brother Chris, attempts to infiltrate the Umbrella HQ in Paris. She's captured by security though and sent to Umbrella's prison facility located on Rockfort Island.



1998 Dec. | **Resident Evil: CODE: Veronica**
Wesker attacks Rockfort Island and in the process starts a T-Virus outbreak. Claire escapes her cell and meets fellow prisoner Steve Burnside. Alfred Ashford blames Claire for the attack, releasing a Tyrant to destroy her before escaping to the Antarctic to reanimate his sister Alexia, whose 15 years of cryo-stasis are up. Claire and Steve follow him and discover Alexia's T-Veronica experiment has turned her into a powerful but mentally stable mutant. Chris Redfield turns up, helping to defeat Alexia while Steve is infected by the T-Veronica virus, dies, and has his corpse swiped by a now super-human Wesker.

2002
Resident Evil: Dead Aim
Ex-Umbrella researcher Morpheus D. Duvall attacks the cruise ship Spencer Rain, threatening to launch T-Virus warheads at U.S. soil. U.S. Stratcom agent Bruce McGiven is sent to bring Duvall down, who then injects himself with the experimental T-G Virus. At first there is no sign of infection, but as McGiven blasts Duvall, rapid mutation causes him to explode.

2003 **Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles**
Chris and Jill, and Albert Wesker launch separate assaults on Sergei Vladimir's Tyrant research center in Russia. The destruction of Umbrella's last stronghold sees the beginning of the end for the evil corporation, but while Redfield and Valentine rejoice, Wesker is the real winner as he's stolen Umbrella's extensive bio-weapon database and intends to resurrect Umbrella with himself as its CEO.

2004 **Resident Evil 4**
U.S. government agent Leon Kennedy's search for Ashley Graham, the President's missing daughter, takes him to rural Spain where he discovers villagers infected by mind-controlling parasites known as Las Plagas. Cult leader Osmund Saddler is responsible and has designs on global domination. Leon manages to rescue Ashley and escape with the help of Ada Wong, who continues to work for Wesker, locating virus samples. She delivers a fake sample of Las Plagas to him suggesting she is operating as a double agent.

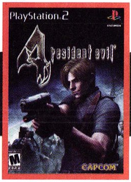
2005 Stepping outside the *Resident Evil* gaming universe, the new CGI movie *Resident Evil Degeneration* tells the tale of bio-terrorist Curtis Miller who releases the T-Virus in a U.S. airport. Fortunately, battle-hardened biohazard vets Leon Kennedy and Claire Redfield "just happen" to be present to handle the situation.

2006 **Resident Evil 5**
Jill Valentine dies in the service of the Bioterrorism Security Assessment Alliance (BSAA), the organization created by the Global Pharmaceutical Consortium to stop deliberate viral outbreaks.

2008 **Resident Evil 5**
BSAA agent Chris Redfield lands in West Africa to investigate a viral outbreak, joining forces with local BSAA operative, Sheva Alomar.

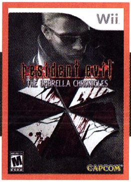
SPAWN OF THE DEAD

2005



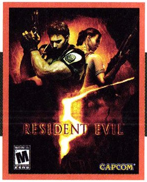
Resident Evil 4 PS2

2007



RE: The Umbrella Chronicles Wii

2009



Resident Evil 5 PS3

GamesRadar.com Top 7...

Bad guys you didn't want to kill

The gaming murders that left a bad taste in our mouths

The Colossi

Shadow of the Colossus

Most of these huge beasts are just minding their own business and only attack once provoked. Colossus 13 doesn't even retaliate, instead merely attempting to shake you off. They clearly feel pain too - stab them in the head and you'll know about it. Come on, one of them's even got a cool beard, yet you still killed it, didn't you? It's dead now. You did it. Shame on you.

Wanna read more?

- Stereotypical gamers we hate
- Gaming nudity you didn't notice
- Secret shame games

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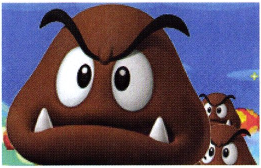
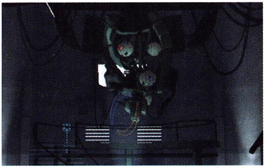


Goombas

Super Mario Bros.

If you stand still and they hit you, you die, but then that's true of buses and you don't go around stamping on them. You only get 100 points per kill too - the gaming equivalent of a $5.00 whole chicken. Has life really become so discounted?



GLaDOS

Portal

Just as hostages can come to bond with their captors, so you end up liking GLaDOS - the female-voiced computer in Portal, the Best Game Ever Made (TM). Guilt for killing her is prolonged because you have to do it a piece at a time. While she talks to you. (Sniff.)

Orbinaut

Sonic the Hedgehog

After these critters toss their spikes they're just cute, marshmallowy-looking creatures that just stare and slowly move forwards. They're now totally harmless. Are you really such a bastard that you'd kill them? Yep, us too. But we felt dirty afterwards.

Big Daddies

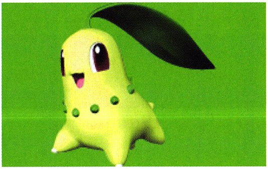
BioShock

They're huge, ugly, armed with a massive drill and turn violent with only the smallest provocation, but the Big Daddies still make us sad when they die. They're only protecting their Little Sister after all. 'Wake up, Mr Bubbles?' Sorry, ain't gonna happen.

Spotty Bulorb

Pikmin

This is the angry mob lynching of gaming, The Spotty Bulorb is surrounded in its sleep, worn down and then killed. While its children watch! Or maybe you killed them first? OK, so it's just like nature. But nature can be so cruel.



Level 1

Pokemon

You've been playing for ages and you run into a low-level Pokemon. That's when you realise your super-powered team of fighters has become a remorseless unit. What chance does a level 2 Pidgey have against your level 67 Glaceon?

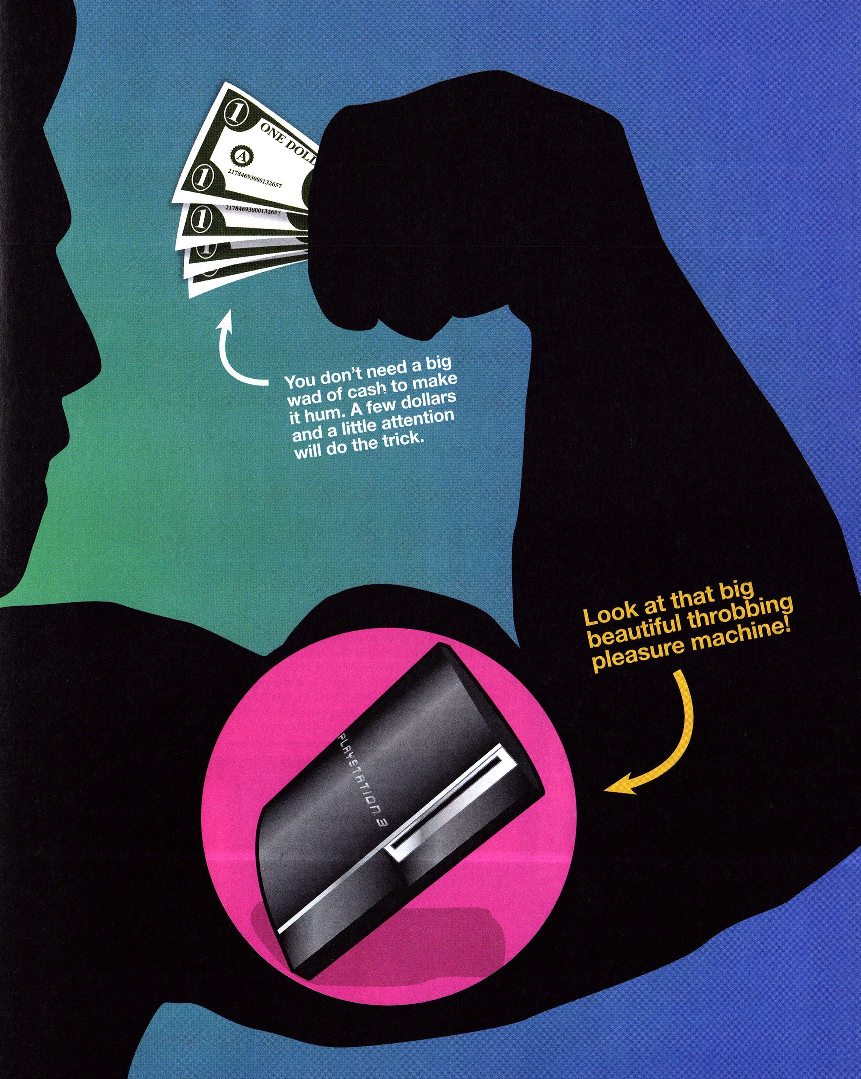
gamesradar.com
The official website of the internet

MAXIMUM GAMING FOR MINIMAL MONEY

15 WAYS YOUR PS3 CAN HELP YOU SURVIVE THE RECESSION

MONEY IS TIGHT. YOU KNOW IT. WE KNOW IT. OUR EMPTY WALLETS DEFINITELY KNOW IT.

So what's a gamer to do? Before you even consider pawning your PS3 to pay your mortgage/rent/gas bills, stop, take a deep breath, and read our guide. By squeezing every last cent of value out of bargain-priced new games, free DLC, and even your old games (and limiting expenditures on more expensive endeavors, like eating), you'll save precious cash. And it's a fact that games make you happy. Win-win—for both you and your wallet.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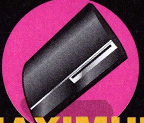
PLAYSTATION 3

You don't need a big wad of cash to make it hum. A few dollars and a little attention will do the trick.

Look at that big beautiful throbbing pleasure machine!



MAXIMUM GAMING FOR MINIMAL MONEY

1 Stay In

Unlike other areas of life, we're led to believe that the games industry is fairly resilient to the pressures of a recession. What's the one thing that happens when money gets tight? People stay in. Save money by entertaining yourself on the cheap indoors; a copy of *MGS4* is cheaper than a holiday in Mexico City. In fact, a family holiday south of the border will set you back $2,000 on cheaptickets.com; for that you can get a brand new PS3 and 20 games. You won't need to come out until the credit crunch has run its course.

Taking the traveling gnome anywhere but your own house may be out of the question. But he'll happily watch you play PS3 games.

2 Buy Online

Don't pay silly money prices for games that you can find cheaper online. By and large, the big electronics stores aren't slashing prices on PS3 hardware; if you want a cheaper console you'll need to go to online auction sites like eBay.com. You should expect to pick up a secondhand PlayStation 3 for under $200, saving vital cash to splash on secondhand games and peripherals.

3 Trade In

The easiest way to save money is not to pay full price for a game. Ever again. Dig through your games collection looking for crap to trade in. Do you really play that copy of *Wall-E* your grandma bought you for your birthday because she still doesn't understand you're all grown up now with a job, a girlfriend, and delicately sculpted facial hair? No matter, old games you never play can fetch a decent price as a trade-in (that copy of *Wall-E* would net you $10). (Though we don't recommend buying trade-ins, pre-used, whatever. Splash that extra $5 and buy a brand new copy to help support the developers working to bring you the next big thing.)

A handful of games you've played but no longer want can add up to the cost of a new game.

4 Try Something New

Here's the deal. Story-driven games like *Condemned 2, The Bourne Conspiracy,* and *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed,* don't offer long-term value. You finish it, watch the credits roll, and sit back to admire your work. The Credit Crunch demands more. You need old-school games you can go back to, games that demand you beat them rather than complete them, games like *The Club.* Before the Credit Crunch these games were out of favor, so they're going for cheap now.

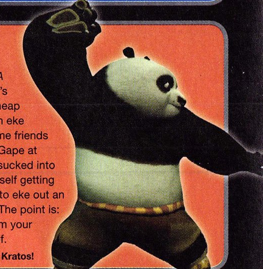
The best replayable games for under a Jackson? Here are three you'll find lying unwanted in a bargain bin right now:

THE CLUB (SEGA)
A strange mixture of arcade blasting and racing, *The Club* challenges you to reach the end of a level in the fastest time with the highest possible score. There's plenty of room to develop your style, shave seconds off your time, and fine-tune your points tally.

SEGA RALLY REVO (SEGA)
This is old-fashioned no-thrills arcade racing that still grabs you and demands perfection. The need to master every bend will soon become the bane of your life.

NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA (TECMO/EIDOS)
So hard it'll take you months to master, and longer still to complete; well, maybe just one month. Wallow in some of the most hardcore hacking and slashing gameplay on PS3.

5 Ironic Gaming

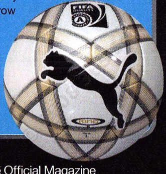


You have a collection of great games. You've played *MGS4, GTA IV,* and *Uncharted* to death. There's nothing more to see or do. The cheap option is to go ironic. Ironic gaming means you can eke out pleasure from the worst-ever games. Invite some friends over and laugh at the B-movie one-liners in *Haze*. Gape at the incomprehensible plotting of *Dark Sector.* Get sucked into the uncontrollable epic nonsense of *Lair.* Find yourself getting strangely addicted to *Kung Fu Panda's* bold effort to eke out an experience akin (loosely) to *God of War*…for kids. The point is: crap games are cheap. Ironic gaming can only harm your reputation and not your bank balance. It's foolproof.

A shave and a diet, and panda Po *is* Kratos!

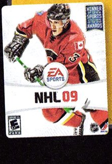
6 Hold Tournaments

Make your game nights more fun by holding regular tournaments. *Pro Evolution* nights are always good, same with *Soulcalibur IV* or *Street Fighter IV.* Get four TVs in your living room to simulate home and away matches. Why not throw $5 each into the pot for a winner-takes-all buzz? Just remember to lock the doors to stop flaky players from running out.

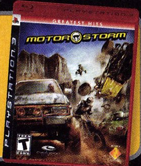


7 Share Games

It sounds simple enough, but why not spread the cost of a new game among your group of friends? Sports games like *Madden* and *FIFA* are always best played together, so chipping in for a group copy of *NHL 09 or NBA 2K9* makes perfect sense.



8 Buy Budget



SCEA recently released its budget label, in snazzy red packaging. Games in the collection are selling for $29.99 and include first-party titles *Resistance, MotorStorm,* and *Heavenly Sword.* Plus third parties are getting in on the action with *Sega Rally, WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 08,* and *Assassin's Creed* all getting a re-release. SCEA's *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune* is among the best of the bunch, a brilliant game now backed by Trophies.

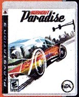
9 Play Online

Playing online costs you nothing other than your standard monthly broadband splurge. So why not make the most of it? Games such as *Call of Duty: World at War, CoD4, Battlefield: Bad Company,* and *Resistance 2* have a thriving online community and all four offer an unlockables-based structure meaning the more you play the better you get and the more unlockables you earn. Get a good online game *(CoD* is still the pack leader) and you won't need anything else. Money saved.

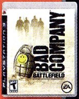
10 Free Updates

EA's new goal is to find ways to ensure you keep its games stuck in your PS3 for longer and don't trade them in. To this end, the super-publisher has opted to give away free content for its biggest games. Other publishers have also been offering new maps, weapons, and scenarios for existing games, for free. If you're on a tight budget, then games with regular free updates that extend their lifespan (like *Burnout Paradise)* are a must.

Here are some of the best games that come with free updates, packed with new maps, game modes, and items:



BURNOUT PARADISE (EA)
Expect to pay around $30 for this open-world racer. The main game is big enough, but consistent new updates add great value to the package. The Cagney offered new cars and game modes; The Bikes Pack brought night races and motorcycles to the *Burnout* formula, and the forthcoming Big Surf Island Pack promises a huge new map with the biggest air jumps yet (although there will be a fee for this one).



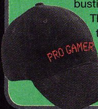
BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY (EA)
EA got into a spot of hot water when it became apparent that some of the juicier weapons in *Bad Company* would need to be purchased. They bottled it, and put them in for free, and in keeping with EA's newfound generosity, the series staple Conquest Mode (similar to *CoD4's* Domination, you must capture and hold flags to use as respawn points) has been released as free DLC. Developer DICE has also reworked four old maps to accompany the download, and new weather conditions have been created just for this free new mode.

KANE & LYNCH
DEAD MEN

KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN (EIDOS)
The mature shooter *Kane & Lynch* was a solid game with a unique online mode that demanded that you stab your buddies in the back while on a robbery, making off with everyone's money. Eidos released four new maps, each with a unique scenario (from bank robberies to a military ambush in South America). The game is selling cheaply now, so this extra free content offers great value for old and new players alike.

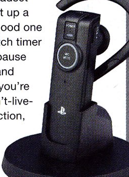
11 Go Pro

Enjoy energy drinks, fried chicken, and wearing T-shirts emblazoned with Pokémon, *Street Fighter* characters, or nondescript military phrases? Then sir/ma'am, you're a Pro Gamer. It's hard to get into and you do need to be obsessively good, but if you manage to get on the tour, you'll make a recession-busting living through sponsorship. The downside is that most pro tournaments are built around games like *Halo* and *Quake,* and there's currently no pro league listed for *PixelJunk Monsters.*



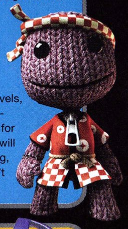
12 Free Phone Calls

Get yourself a Bluetooth headset and boot up a game. *Soulcalibur IV* is a good one to try. Just turn off the match timer to stay in the game. Now pause the game or just sit there and chat away. For free. Sure, you're already paying for that can't-live-without Broadband connection, but you do get unlimited international calls to overseas PS3 buddies.



13 Do It Yourself

In theory, SCEA's *LittleBigPlanet* is going to be the game that keeps on giving. Buy it, and you'll never need another game because you can just make your own with the extensive level creator. When not constructing your own levels, download any of the hundreds currently available for free, and lil' ol' Sackboy will just keep on giving, giving, and giving, and you won't pay one additional dime.

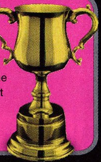


14 PSN Games

The last year has seen a rise in the quality and quantity of PSN games. These are no longer quaint takes on old ideas, but inventive, deep, and rewarding titles in their own right. They boast short-term novelty and long-term challenge, and retail at pocket friendly, money-saving prices. *PixelJunk Monsters* is a no-brainer download for 10 bucks.

15 Trophies

The Trophy system (earn Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze "Trophies" for completing hidden tasks in a game) could be your biggest Credit Crunch friend. Why buy a new game when you have yet to unlock the Platinum Trophy in *Super Stardust HD?* The reason to pursue Trophies is to brag, to show off your PS3 Profile online, and boast about your achievements in the most mundane games imaginable. It's the virtual equivalent of mine's bigger than yours. Not all games support Trophies, but by the time you read this, Trophies will be mandatory in every new PS3 game.



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MATURE 17+
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Strong Language

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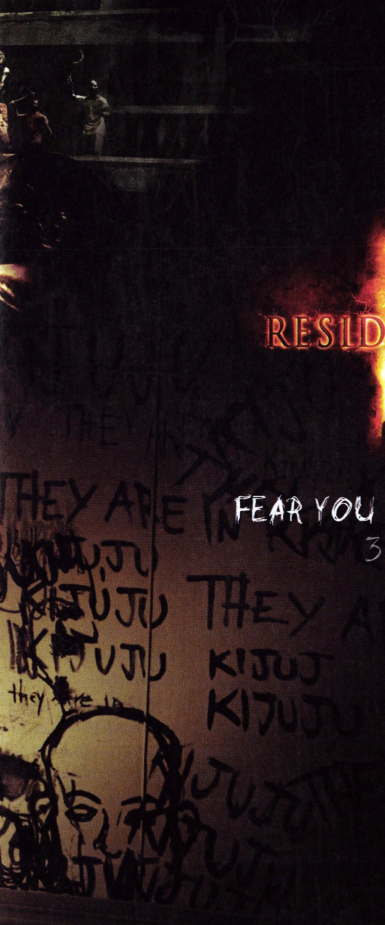
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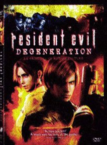
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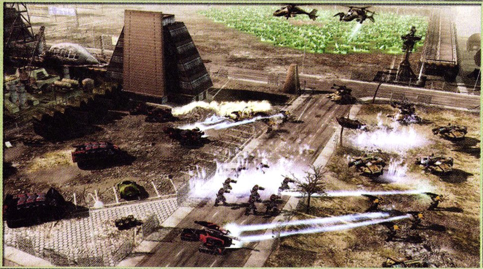

PATCHES

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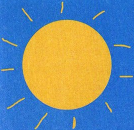
You can't, and neither can FileRadar.net.

“Make me a sammich, woman!!”

One brave, young (female) editor’s journey into the hearts and minds of the general PlayStation Home populace. (God help her).

By Teresa Dun

Hey! It’s not nice to call someone fat to their face!
Tizzy, will you be my girlfriend?
Are you one of those transsexuals?
Senorita Tizzy, I love you. Want to have babies?



Is Tizzy your real name? Are you really a girl? No way.

Want special Home items without spending a penny? Create a Hong Kong PSN account, download the Namco Museum (a big "n" in a red square, you can't miss it), boot it up in your main PSN account (the one with your Home character), play the demos *(Pacman, Dig Dug,* etc.), and score exclusive items for Home. Act quickly: who knows how long this trick will work?

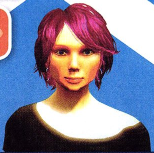
Number of lanes in the Bowling Alley: 5

Number of pool tables: 6

Number of arcades: 10

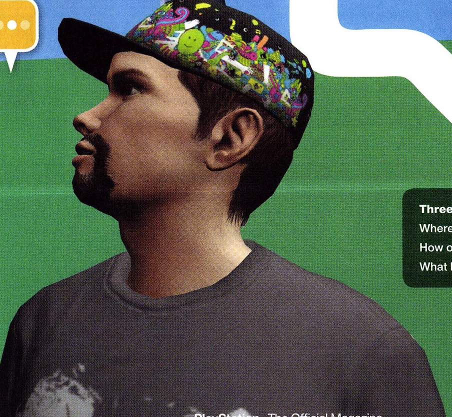
The amount of time I have to wait to get access to any of them: Way too long! Hey guys, learn to share!

Meet me!



For a chance to join the Tizzy Club, message Tizzy_01 on PSN with "I love Tizzy!" as the subject line. There's really no point to the club, since Tizzy_01 was created solely for this Home story and will soon be retired. But if you're interested anyway, send the message. First 30 people will get an invite.

She's probably some 50-year-old in his undies playing from his mom's basement.



Three most commonly asked questions:

Where are you from? (74 times)

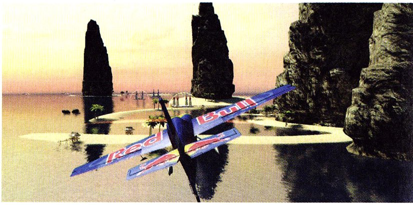
How old are you? (51 times)

What kind of games do you like? (32 times)

PICK A SNAZZY OUTFIT

Lack the desire or funds to buy designer clothing in real life? Purchase virtual imitations for mere pennies, like a Diesel outfit (actual pieces from their Spring/Summer 2009 collection). Yes, I know, spending hard-earned cash on make-believe items sounds ludicrous, but hey, putting down five bucks for an outfit that'll make your avatar stand out isn't a big deal when you remember that Home is otherwise *free.*

Alternately, score new outfits through exclusive events (like the PSP event hat), arcade games (go play *echochrome* and *Ice Breaker* in the Bowling Alley), and possibly even through earning trophies in regular games (not yet implemented). Remember, the whole point of Home is that the space and the items are constantly changing.

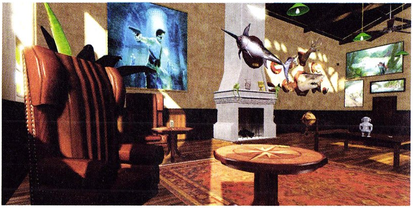


CARVE OUT YOUR OWN HANGOUTS

The key to enjoying Home? Finding a corner where you can hang out with friends and feel comfortable. One possible option is to pick a spot in one of the game environments (I recommend lounging by the fireplace in *Uncharted's* Smuggler's Den).

Or, if you've got the funds, you can buy your own clubhouse and invite 32 others to join you. Currently, it's $4.99 to purchase the club, and it comes with its own basic clubhouse for you to decorate. In the future, there will be a monthly fee to maintain the club. I scoffed at the cost at first, but considering that PSN is free (unlike that *other* system, where you have to plop down 70 bucks just to play online), I relaxed my vendetta and dressed up my own Tizzy clubhouse instead.

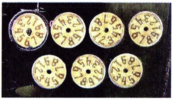
When you're not basking in exclusivity, check out the festivities in the constantly evolving events and game environments, such as the forthcoming *Red Bull* or *MotorStorm* space. They'll include new mini-games, contests, and more.



UNCHARTED

You've been to Sully's Bar, walked around, and perhaps even pretended to order a virtual drink (you know, to impress the ladies). But if you haven't seen what's behind the three locked doors yet, you're a bit behind. So here, for your benefit, are the codes.

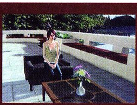
Downstairs: 1024, then 1577 383
Upstairs Right: 24312
Upstairs Left: 41675



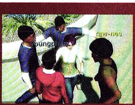
»Tizzy goes Home (and yowza, what an experience!)

»Bringing Tizzy—a figment of my imagination—to the PlayStation Home wasn't easy. She's a bit sass, a bit spunk, and a whole lot of kick-ass gamer attitude. And *I'm* artistically retarded. I wanted her cute as a button, with a shock of pink hair just for fun. How'd I do?

»I tried dressing her with the limited base options—black on black, simple elegance—but ended up shelling out $1.47 for some sleeker options. The current interface doesn't allow you to preview before purchase, so there were a few costly fashion fiascos, but in the end, Tizzy was content.

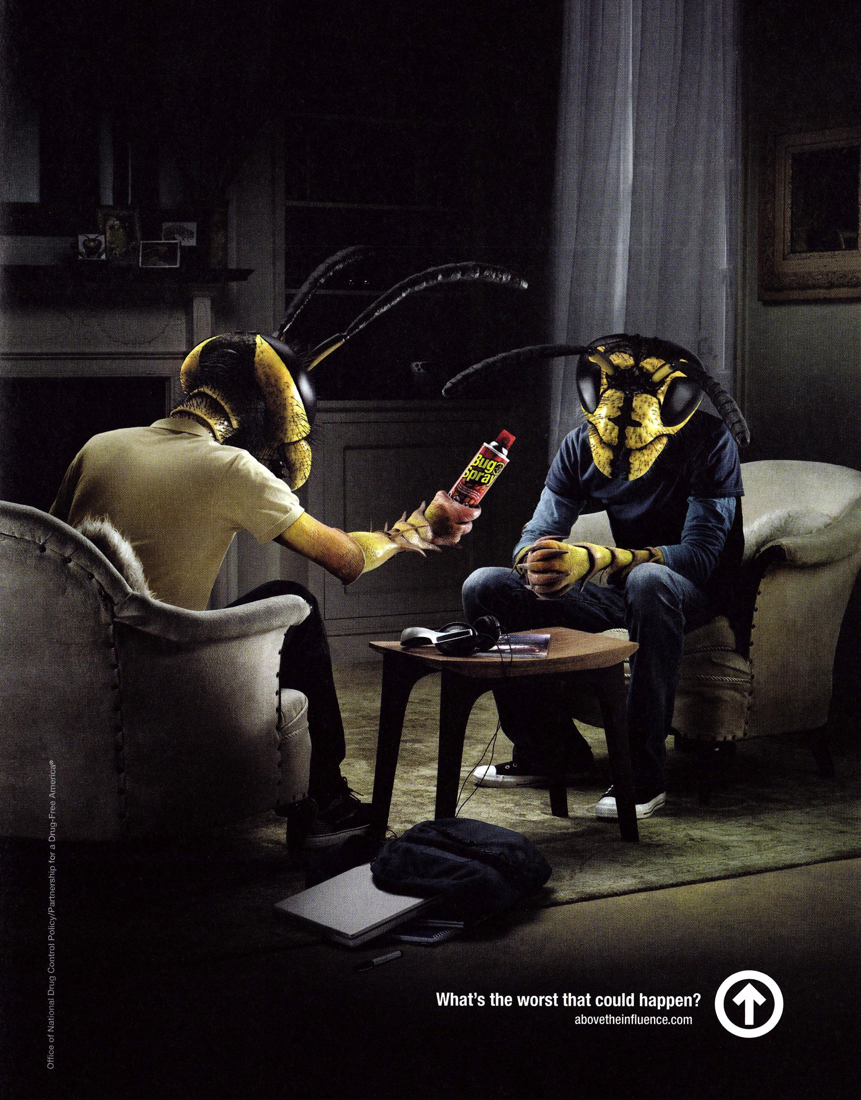


»Next, I had to deck out Tizzy's apartment. First, I rearranged the furniture in her Harbor Studio place and added some pretty pink wallpaper, but Tizzy wasn't satisfied. She's a bit extravagant. I ended up splurging on a Summer House and a whole set of new fittings. Oh Tizzy, you're killing my piggy bank!



»With an elegant outfit, a classy place to entertain, and a smug attitude, Tizzy was ready to strut among the Home masses. Whoa, Tizzy, you look hot doing the salsa. Apparently, everyone else thinks so, too! They're all dancing along!

»Tizzy couldn't walk two steps without attracting hordes of male avatars, friend requests, and lame attempts to entice her to converse. (I noticed the same thing happening to all female avatars.) Of course, proud Tizzy mocked all the boys who tried to woo her.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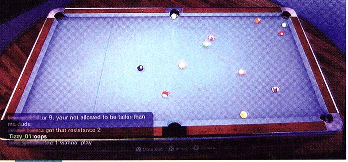


[redacted]:ur 9. your not allowed to be taller than me dude

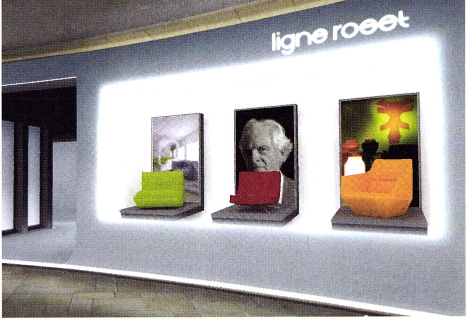
[redacted]:u got that resistance 2

Tizzy_01:oops

[redacted]:ne 1 wanna play

SIT BACK, RELAX, AND JOIN IN

The whole point of Home is to meet other PS3 fans. So put aside your prejudices for one night, jump into Home, and just *talk* to folks. Sure, you'll meet some people who have nothing in common with you and a couple of creeps you think would be better off locked up, but if you join a few rounds of bowling or pool, dance for a bit in Central Plaza, or hang out in the movie theater, you just might find some new gaming buddies—go-to folks that you'll be able to count on for a round of *Call of Duty* or *LittleBigPlanet.* And if you do, Home will have accomplished its purpose: providing a space for PS3 gamers to connect.



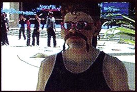
Tizzy_01
TOTAL: -

SPRUCE UP YOUR APARTMENT

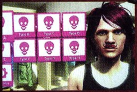
Oops, silly me. I'd never even heard of Ligne Roset, a French furniture brand that's been around for over a century. But thanks to the PlayStation Home, my knowledge of interior design has grown. While that doesn't really benefit *me* (I'll never be able to afford their luxurious designs), it benefits Tizzy because it means her Summer House will be simply extravagant.

Like the clothes, the furniture is optional. But through Tizzy, I'll be able to live the life I'll never have. (And shopping for a mini-world is so much cheaper than shopping for my real apartment.) Now that I think about it, that's a little sad. ■

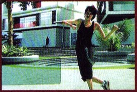
Tizzy goes Home (continued)



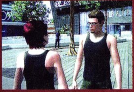
»It was fun at first. Wily Tizzy even convinced some suckers to buy her clothes (unfortunately, trading wasn't yet implemented). But then, random strangers started humping her avatar. When she sat on a bench, they sat on the floor, head between her thighs, and nodded (no further comment needed).



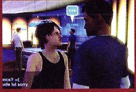
»Tizzy finally had enough when one stranger asked if she gave certain sexual favors and another messaged her to give her his email and say, "Add me for sex." My avatar begged me to turn her into a guy. I complied, with a twist. I made her look like herself, *pretending* to be a guy. Ah, the divine irony.



»Time to test it out. Tizzy returned to Central Plaza in her new guise and started dancing the salsa. No one bugged her. No one cared. In fact, no one even noticed. Victory! Tizzy breathed a sigh of relief.



»But then, 20 minutes went by, and still not a single person approached. Tizzy was getting lonely. She walked up to a random stranger and tried to start a conversation. His responses were monosyllabic. Being a guy was hard work! Tizzy started to feel bad for her earlier harsh treatment toward suitors.



»Desperate to socialize, Tizzy teleported to some friends. When they saw her, one exclaimed, ""Who hit you with an ugly stick?" Hurt, Tizzy asked, "Does it make a difference what I look like?" Their response? "Of course not," but within minutes, they all "had to go," and Tizzy was alone again. Who'll be her friend now? Will you?

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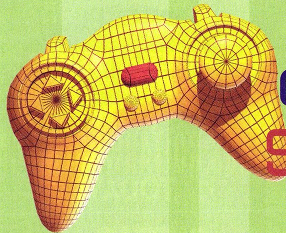

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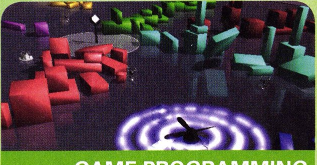

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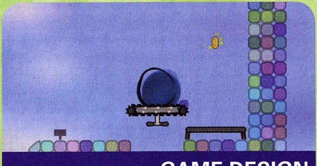
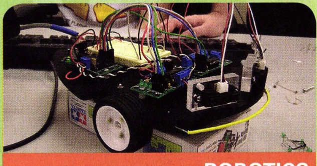


GAME DESIGN



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Lauryn Hill	Ex Factor	Fugee Fan 97	24 votes
Our Lady Peace	4 AM	GUITAR	120 votes

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WHO'S YOUR DADDY?
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Reviews

Scores | Analysis | Buying Advice

RATINGS

★★★★★ LEGENDARY
A game so amazing, the entire PTOM staff recommends it. A must buy!

★★★★½ SUPERB
Not quite a timeless classic, but one of the finest of its breed.

★★★★ GREAT!
A finely crafted, thoroughly enjoyable experience. Worth your time and money.

★★★½ SOLID
A strong game. We noticed some flaws, but there's more to like than loathe.

★★★ ENJOYABLE
If the topic/license/style is your thing, there's enough to keep you entertained.

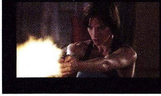
★★½ MEDIOCRE
An equal blend of sweet and sour. Discerning gamers can find better.

★★ SCARRED
A smattering of entertainment hidden amongst an abundance of flaws.

★½ FRUSTRATING
"Argh!" will be the self-created soundtrack of this game. No thank you.

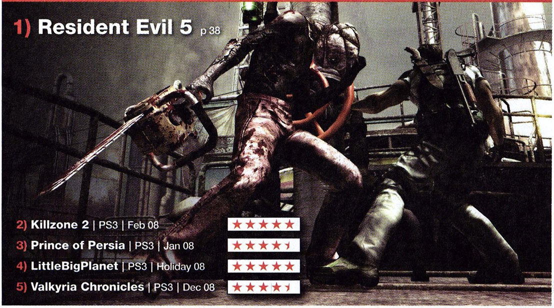
★ PAINFUL
We played it so you don't have to. Now you owe us cookies.

½ BROKEN
Hey, it comes in a free plastic box! Wee!



Win junk from Rob's desk! We'll select one winner from emails that correctly identify the three photos from our Rating scale and explain how they're related. Send your answers with the subject line "March Ratings" to PTOM_letters@futureus.com.

Hot 5 List Top Picks from the Last Five Issues



1) Resident Evil 5 p 38

2) Killzone 2 | PS3 | Feb 08 ★★★★★

3) Prince of Persia | PS3 | Jan 08 ★★★★½

4) LittleBigPlanet | PS3 | Holiday 08 ★★★★★

5) Valkyria Chronicles | PS3 | Dec 08 ★★★★½

Meet the experts delivering your buying advice

In honor of *RE5* and *F.E.A.R. 2*, the PTOM crew divulge their scariest gaming or real-life moments.

ROB SMITH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Aliens vs. Predator on PC. I died in one small monochromatic maze three times without even seeing the alien. Fourth time, I tread oh-so slowly, pick up the blip on the motion sensor, and move towards it. Slowly. Slowly. Still can't see it. Then wait a moment. What if? I looked straight up, right as the slimy face of the alien dropped down from a hidden ceiling shaft. Squeal. Flatline. Change pants.

NOW PLAYING: *F.E.A.R. 2, LittleBigPlanet, Fallout 3,* Home

TERESA DUN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

It makes Teresa sweat to think about it, but once she almost lost her *Soulcalibur IV* champion title...to Ken. She had taught him some of her techniques and for one disturbing round, he almost beat her. Almost. She played it off of course. "Ha! You thought you had a chance! I was toying with you the whole time!" But the truth is, she still whimpers when she sees Ken playing the game.

NOW PLAYING: *LocoRoco 2, Call of Duty: World at War, Burn Zombie Burn!*

KEN BOUSQUET
ART DIRECTOR

The PSP and the PS3 have that message not to do anything rash like shut down while the machine is saving. After giving up a goal in *FIFA Champions League* on the PSP, Ken rashly shut down the handheld in disgust and then it wouldn't restart! The usually composed Ken feared his gaming career was over. How could he cope with the editors' barrage of blown deadlines without his daily dose of footie!?

NOW PLAYING: *FIFA Soccer 09* (Really, why do we bother asking? The answer doesn't change.)

CARLOS RUIZ
INTERN

The scariest moment for Carlos was encountering Pigsy. According to our shaking intern, everything was violent and dark...desperately hiding from a naked, pig's head-wearing, chainsaw-wielding psycho in a place that looked like the floor of a hotel after a fire. (You've really got to move to a nicer building, Carlos... What? *Manhunt?* It's a *gaming* moment? Oops...sorry.)

NOW PLAYING: *BioShock, Mega Man 9, Silent Hill Homecoming*

ROGER BURCHILL
MANAGING EDITOR

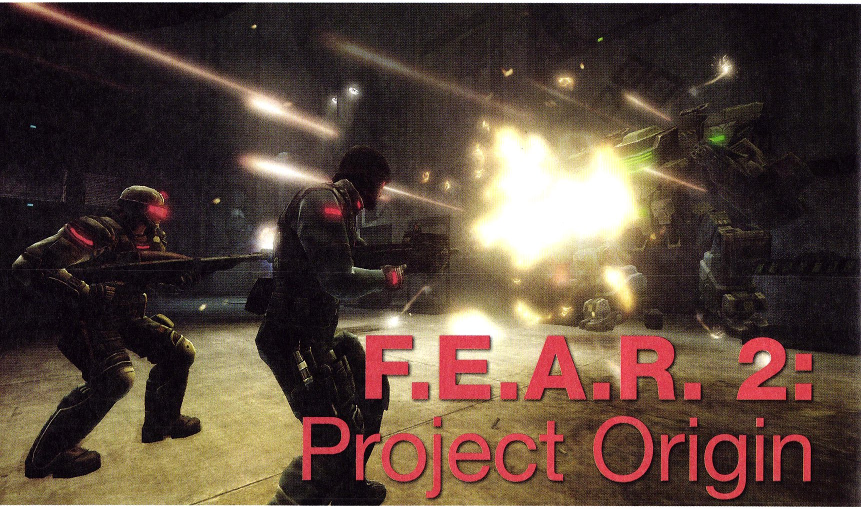
Roger still vividly remembers the first time the zombie dogs in *Resident Evil* came crashing through the hallway window...the way his heart skipped, how the hair on his neck stood up, how he fled in terror. Eerilly similar to the time when a cute girl Roger had briefly and casually met, and whom he was considering asking out, dropped by to introduce him to her *father.* The horror...

NOW PLAYING: *Resident Evil 5, Resident Evil 4, LittleBigPlanet, LEGO Batman*

SCOTT BUTTERWORTH
ASSISTANT EDITOR

One month after earning his driver's license, Scott—piloting his parents' '91 Dodge Caravan—crested a familiar hill. On that night, however, there was a row of hazard cones running from one curb to the other for no good reason. Long story short, vans with thousands of miles on them have crap brakes, and airbags smell like burning. There were no injuries, but the scariest part? Scott was rollin' in a *minivan!*

NOW PLAYING: *Resident Evil 5, Street Fighter IV, Fallout 3* (still), *Skate 2*



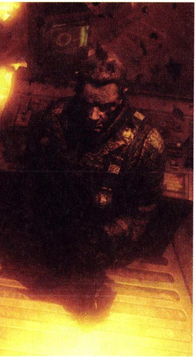
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin

Multiplayer *F.E.A.R. 2* is at its most visceral when one guy's in the EPA, and the rest are trying to get in.

PS3 | R

Don't play mind games with this little girl

PS3 PRICE: $59.99 ESRB: Mature PUBLISHER: Warner Brothers Interactive DEVELOPER: Monolith Productions

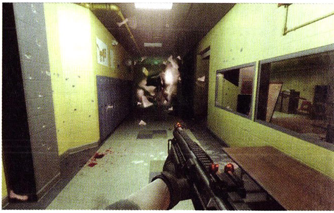


You're not afraid of that little girl standing a few feet away, are you? How could you be? You're Michael Becket, armed to the teeth, and a member of Delta Force. But when said young Addams Family reject leaps right in your grill, those girly features grizzled into haggishness, consider it a very immediate reminder that she's capable of unleashing a psychic apocalypse, and you're a grunt. The scene of urban devastation around you should be another powerful clue; wrecked buildings, smoldering remains, but you still have a mission.

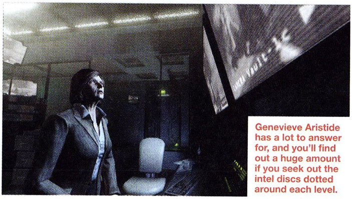
Initially sent to take into protective custody Genevieve Aristide, head of Armacham Technology Corporation (the company behind some weird experimentations involving telepathic powers), the very first mission is a treat. The flow is pitch perfect to get you moving around the environment; the spaces themselves are packed with oh-so-breakable glass to shatter as you pump a handful of bullets into guards, creating spectacular set pieces, and also echoing a few familiar moments from the original game for those taking particular notice. The level detail is terrific; the lighting switches subtly from bright and breezy to dark and eerie (even if many of the textures appear relatively simple), you can peer out of windows to a vast city with cars going about their business in the distance, and you're rewarded for surviving with a spectacular conclusion.

First Encounter

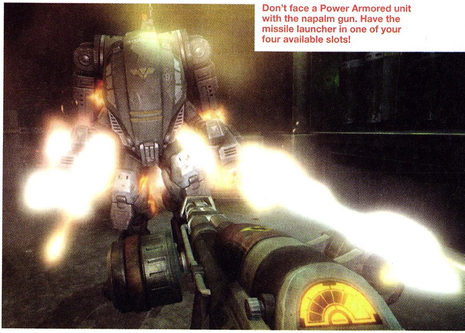
Shortly afterwards Becket's life changes. He's imbued with psychic powers, letting him move at super speeds that, in gameplay terms, creates the slo-mo effect that will be so critical to surviving the ensuing combat situations. Though the amount of slo-mo is limited (but increases ever so slightly with upgrades throughout



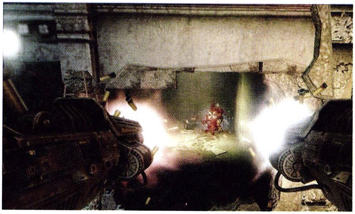
Your ultimate target. A girl like this is impressed by the size of your mind, not the weapon in your hand.



Genevieve Aristide has a lot to answer for, and you'll find out a huge amount if you seek out the intel discs dotted around each level.



Don't face a Power Armored unit with the napalm gun. Have the missile launcher in one of your four available slots!



Though not shown here, the slightly distorted view through the EPA's windshield is terrific, and the HUD looks and sounds superb.

the game) it also heightens senses, giving enemies a metallic shimmer so they can be easily identified for takedown. And the effect never gets old. Whether it's seeing enemy bullets and shells whizz by your ear, or body gyrations as you pump them with lead, you'll take away a distinct moment every time you use it.

Unfortunately, at this point the gameplay progression hits a pretty abrupt and surprisingly long rut. The science lab setting is just dull, and aside from spying TPS Reports on a wall, wading through encroaching enemies became more chore than score. Similarly, some of the genuinely spine-chilling Alma "sightings" (accompanied by a terrifically ominous score) are interspersed with shock-horror moments. When *F.E.A.R. 2* employs its chilling Alma twists, its survival horror roots shine, and the tension and foreboding is palpable. But when it goes for monster shock, it occasionally delves into schlock.

Still, the gameplay segments sucessfully alternate between battling human enemies, fighting ethereal "ghosts" (that can reanimate the dead), evading creepy, scuttling Gollum-like experiments gone wrong, and even causing ultimate devastation in a Mech (Elite Power Armor) suit. It keeps the flow varied, and by interspersing enough chilling Alma visions it consistently reminds you that you're on course for an ultimate telesthetic showdown with Alma (and helps you conveniently forget that the First Encounter Assault Recon troops of the game's title are completely AWOL).

Assault Recon

I was frustrated being forced to backtrack through a couple bland levels at times, though I was never lost and the Mech portion (though brief) plays almost like a railed shooter. But the score is terrific, your supporting unit (who you never fight alongside) serves its purpose to appraise you of the story, and the special effects cast a suitably stylized sheen over everything you see and do.

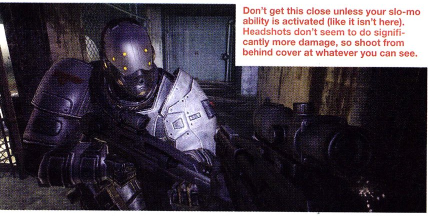
The six multiplayer modes (ranked and unranked, for up to 16 players) provide variety, and given the weighting of so many Trophies based on your experience online, the developers are clearly encouraging you to check out their handiwork. Its success, of course, will entirely depend on the strength and support of the community, which wasn't available at press time.

F.E.A.R. 2 emerges as an effective, competent, entertaining FPS with a chiller story element, rather than a real survival horror shooter. No doubt, Alma (in all her guises) is disquieting, and discovering you'll have to face her provides a suitably ominous cloud to the concluding few levels. Play with the lights dimmed, and don't be surprised if you end up squealing (on the inside) like a little girl.

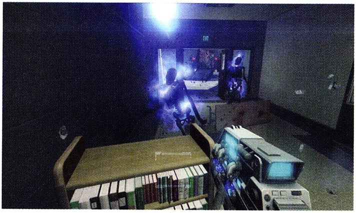
Rob Smith

★★★★

Don't get this close unless your slo-mo ability is activated (like it isn't here). Headshots don't seem to do significantly more damage, so shoot from behind cover at whatever you can see.



Enemies will flip tables and desks for cover. You can do the same, but it's not very effective, and not really needed when you get Snake Fish's energy gun.



Skate 2

Same great game, minus the grind

PS3 PRICE: $59.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: EA DEVELOPER: EA Black Box

The laidback vibe, slower pace, and intuitive controls of the original *Skate* were liberating from the *Tony Hawk* series' arcade intensity, million point combos, and complex buttonmashing. So the worrying initial impression of *Skate 2* is one of bewilderment from the overwhelming variety of new tricks and functions. Walking is clumsy and the unnecessary storyline occasionally gets in the way of the fun. Yet several beguiling, varied, and challenging hours later, EA's sequel reveals itself as a multi-layered labor of love and quite possibly the best skating game ever.

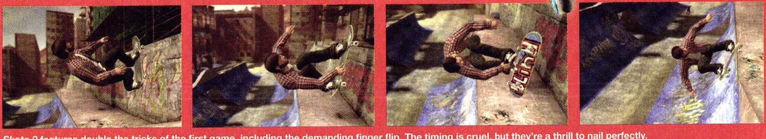
Smooth Transition

At the beginning of the game, New San Vanelona teems with security guards and skate-proof metal blocks on many of the rails and ledges—courtesy of Mongo Corps (jeez, really?)—and it's your job to emancipate these skate spots. After an introductory cutscene that documents your hilarious release from prison, you're thrust into a tutorial section (which can be partially skipped) set in a gritty, industrial warehouse. Five hours in, you're beaming wildly—amid the odd curse—and giddily awaiting each fresh location.

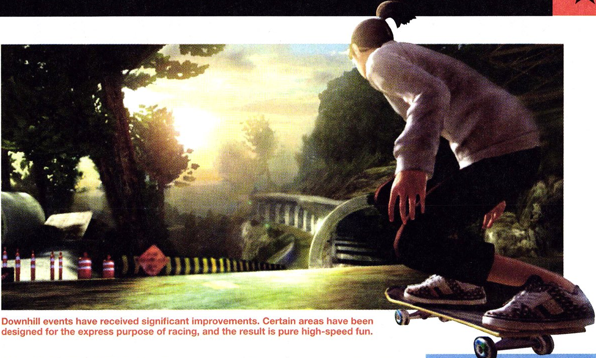
If the original's Career mode lacked variety, this is the perfect rebuttal. It has you leaping off 60-foot rooftops into cracked pools one minute and performing calculated technical moves on miniature rails the next. Scenery shifts from industrial wasteland to gleaming quayside, to rolling hills, to monstrous, jutting architectural oddities (wait until you see The Wall, a 100-foot near-vertical bank with huge, jutting rails at teasing angles).

The races are thrilling, with twisting mountainside circuits designed by the *SSX*-team—a welcome contrast to the make-do city streets of the original. One task asks you to leap through a stone circle and drop vertically through another circle set at 90-degrees below. One memorable Rob Dyrdek challenge has you perform unique grinds on simple ledges while doing mid-trick gestures using the D-pad (like Thumbs Up, Cool, and loads more). Other challenges require you to manipulate scenery (use R1 to drag

Skate's Best New Features



Skate 2 features double the tricks of the first game, including the demanding finger flip. The timing is cruel, but they're a thrill to nail perfectly.



Downhill events have received significant improvements. Certain areas have been designed for the express purpose of racing, and the result is pure high-speed fun.

benches, rails, and ramps). Object placement isn't tricky, but timing leaps is merciless—striking a perfect balance between skill and frustration.

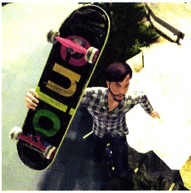
All Hands on Deck

The retooled career mode is just one item on a veritable laundry list of new (or at least improved) features. New tricks—like no complies, finger flips, and handplants—fill obvious gaps in the controls and obey logical rules. Finger flips, for example, are performed by Ollieing (a quick down-up motion on the Right Stick), grabbing (with R2 or L2), and doing the standard kickflip motion (down and then upwards at an angle on the Right Stick) to represent the flip. It's logical, hierarchical, and timing dependent, so while we fluffed our first few tries, we punched the air with a "Yes!" upon nailing our first (landing them every time mere minutes later). As before, the controls mimic skating's real-life exponential difficulty curve. Only Flatland tricks have been omitted, but since they effectively ruined the *Tony Hawk* series—allowing cheap on-the-spot mega-combos—it's no great loss.

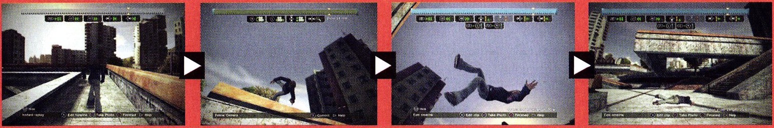
Initially, these new moves feel a bit overwhelming: When you land a trick, however decent, you feel invisibly burdened by the weight of how much better it could have been. The good news is that the objectives reward you for what you know, rather than what you don't—building you up bit by bit before cutting you loose. At first, you're bogged down by simple challenges like leaping off a ramp to grind a rail, but just as it starts to feel stifling, there's a liberating trick-off against pro Danny Way on high-speed, rolling ramps. After popping three-foot heelflips, you're suddenly doing 540 Backflips at breakneck speed over 60-foot humps.

The ability to get off your board (simply tap Triangle), however, is clumsy. Your skater twists on-the-spot like the early *Tomb Raider* games, making precise alignment frustratingly improbable. But despite this, it's still handy—think of it as a tool you never had for climbing up steps, rather than skating the long way around. The game never punishes you for it either. Retrieving your board is easy, too, with a deck "magically" thrown into your hands

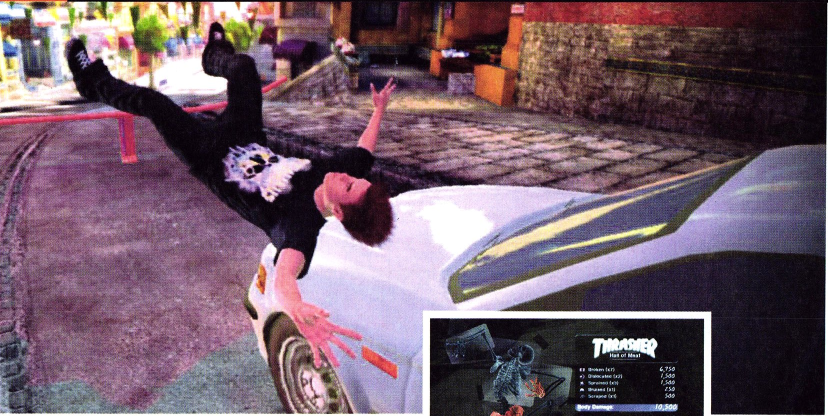
The basic physics and trick commands from the original remain largely unchanged... so they're still great fun.



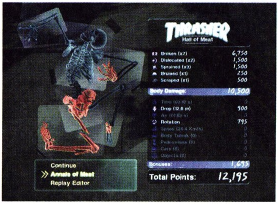
Just remember, as long as you land on an inclined surface, you probably won't bail.



The new video editor is similar to the original but slightly less intuitive, though there are new free-roaming, detachable, and Tripod cameras to show off the scale of your leaps.



You can use the Right Stick to control your in-air movement during a bail. You can even intentionally initate a bail at any time, if you like.

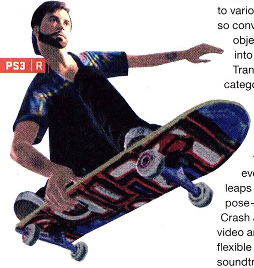


THRASHER
Hall of Meat

Broken (x7)	6,750
Dislocated (x2)	1,500
Sprained (x3)	1,500
Bruised (x1)	250
Scraped (x1)	500
Body Damage:	10,500
Time (03.10 s)	0
Drop (12.8 m)	900
Air (01.63 s)	0
Rotation	795
Speed (26.4 Km/h)	0
Body Tweak (0)	0
Pedestrians (0)	0
Cars (0)	0
Objects (0)	0
Bonuses:	1,695
Total Points:	12,195

Continue
» Annals of Meat
Replay Editor

Your bails will now be scored, and you can actually earn cash if you achieve certain objectives (like hitting cars).



PS3 | R

from off-screen with a tap of the Triangle button.

Your mobile phone is used to call friends to clear out security guards, arrange races with pros, or crowbar blocks off rails, as well as set session markers and instantly teleport to various challenges. Problem? It's so convenient to teleport between objectives on the map—split into clearly marked Street, Tranny, Bonus, Race, and so on categories—that you rarely cruise around (though the option to cruise is still there).

The enhanced Hall of Meat mode awards points for breaking bones. You can even deliberately bail during big leaps and use the Right Stick to pose—think *PAIN* meets *Burnout's* Crash Junctions. The enhanced video and character editors are less flexible than you'd hope, and the soundtrack's arguably less feel-good than the original, even with War's "Lowrider" from Mark Gonzales' part in the seminal *Blind* video.

Get Your Bearings

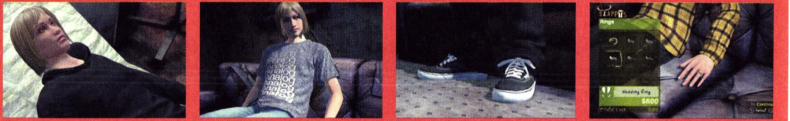
Skate 2's biggest thrills are those you create yourself, sticking to a spot and creating your own goals. Sure, you can ollie that gap, but can you 360 Boneless over it onto the rail below? Or Hardflip off the rail into a Manual? The possibilities are endless, and thanks to the Replay Editor, you need only land one impossible trick in a hundred to lord it over your friends forever. In typical EA fashion, every killer move is rewarded—"You're on fire" shouts your cameraman as you bust out a 3x multiplier with a deliciously slow-mo whirring sound as you clack the tarmac.

With developer Black Box being shut down, there's a real possibility this could be the last *Skate* game ever. If so, we're *almost* glad. It's so complete, with such replay potential, it risks its riches being overlooked in the rush for the new, or by another gilded-lily, fan-fueled sequel. For veterans, the core experience burns slightly less brightly than the first time you mastered *Skate's* incredible controls and physics, but it's a near-perfect sequel in almost every way.

Dan Dawkins

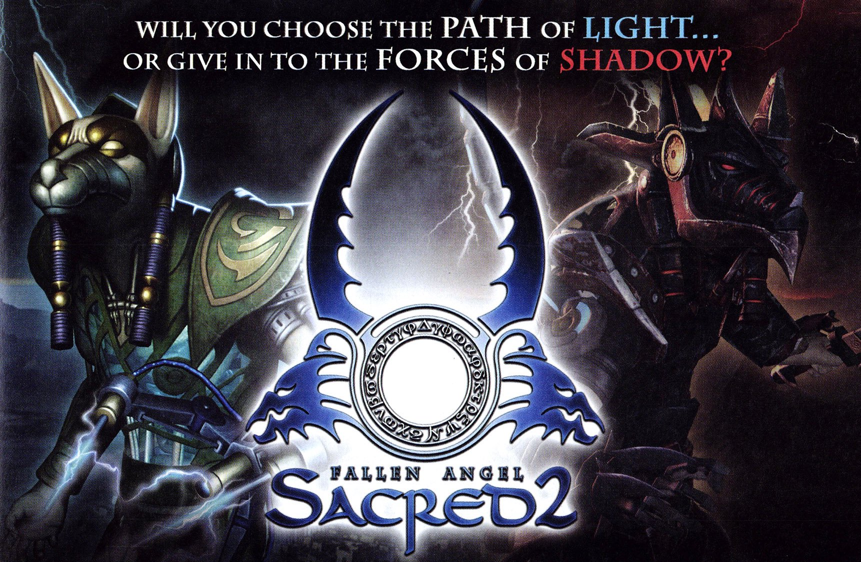
★★★★½

New Features continued...



Yes, you can now create female skaters, and naturally, the licensed brands return, including new-to-the-game companies like Vans. Too bad the facial editor is still weak.

WILL YOU CHOOSE THE PATH OF LIGHT…
OR GIVE IN TO THE FORCES OF SHADOW?



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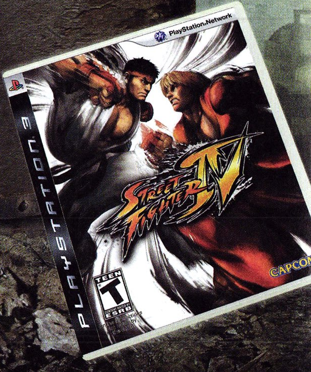
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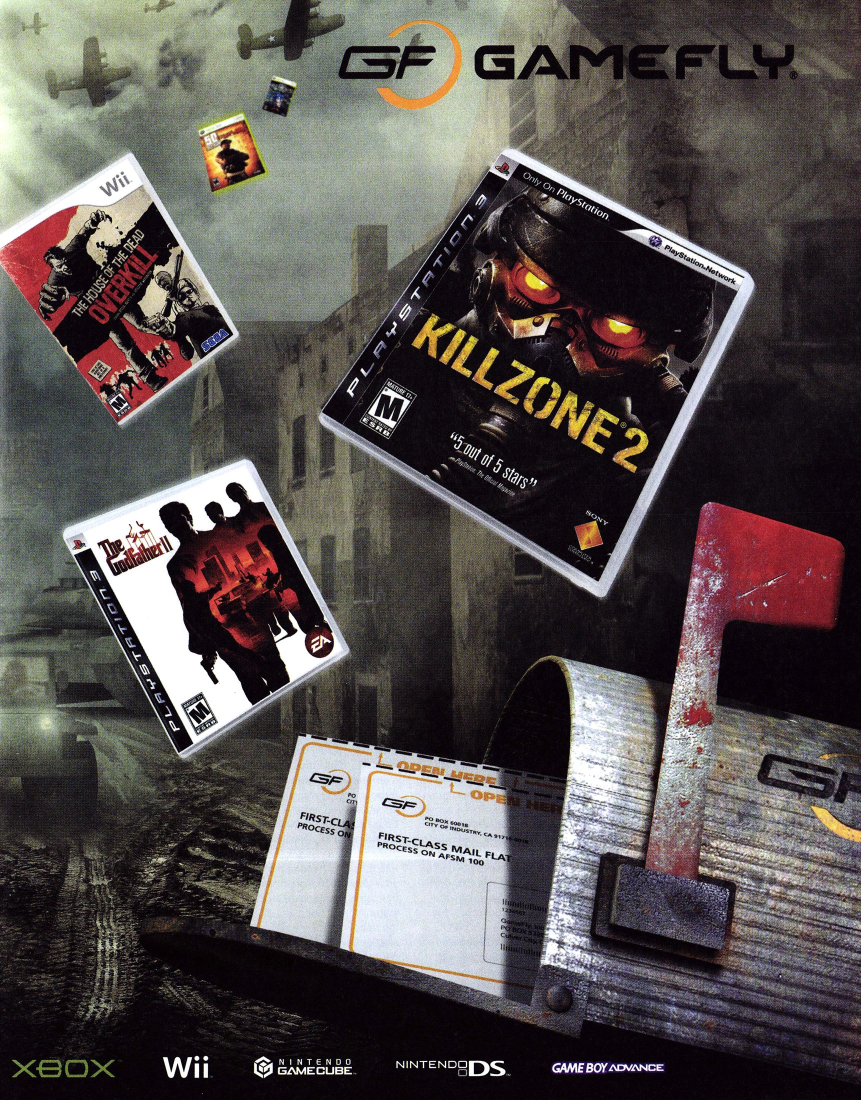
PLAYSTATION 3 PlayStation 2 PSP PlayStation Portable XBOX 360


GF GAMEFLY
Wii
THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD
OVERKILL
SEGA
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PlayStation: The Official Magazine
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NINTENDO GAMECUBE
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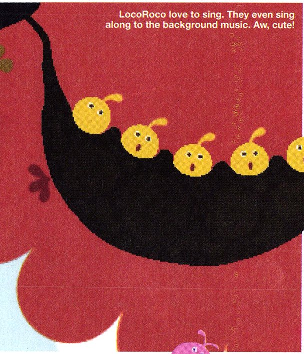
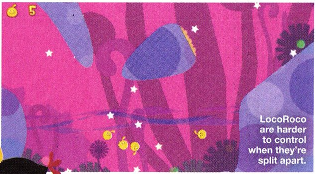
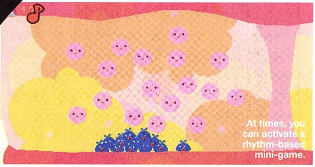
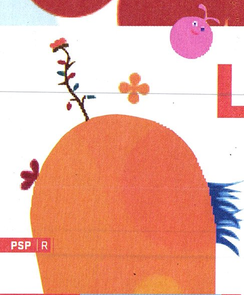
GAME BOY ADVANCE


LocoRoco love to sing. They even sing along to the background music. Aw, cute!


LocoRoco are harder to control when they're split apart.

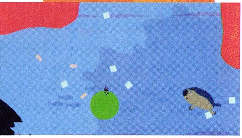

At times, you can activate a rhythm-based mini-game.

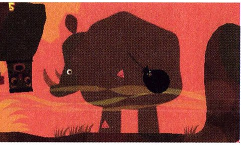


LocoRoco 2

More than just a cute face

PSP PRICE: $19.99 ESRB: Everyone PUBLISHER: SCEA DEVELOPER: Sony Japan Studio


When swimming, beware of playful critters who consider you a toy.


It's fun, latching on to a rhino's tail. But I wonder what he had for lunch.

Allow me to solve the great mystery that's been hovering in the collective PlayStation consciousness since 2006: What are the LocoRoco? Forget the common description ("bouncy yellow circles") or your own observations ("mentally-challenged, smiling, crooning blobs"). No, the truth is far more insidious. The LocoRoco are... crack, nicotine, dark chocolate, pick your drug—utter addiction clothed in bright, child-like innocence. They're housed in a world that's so sugary, so upbeat and colorful, so *Pollyanna,* that many gamers overlook it on principle. But once the game's impeccable level design and staunch (over?) commitment to cutesiness earn your respect (and trust me, they *will), LocoRoco 2* doesn't let go. Not until you've discovered every hidden alcove, collected every last Loco Stamp, and (if you're me) randomly squealed *"MuiMui!"* to half a dozen friends while giggling at how deliciously the word slips off the lips.

The controls are simple: Tilt the world left and right with the Shoulder buttons, forcing the LocoRoco to roll in the direction of gravity. Hold and release the two Shoulder buttons simultaneously to make the LocoRoco jump. Tap Circle to split the big LocoRoco into smaller blobs. The joy comes from discovering the nuances of all the 20-plus stages: nudging a terrified mushroom creature through a false wall to use its floppy head to reach a secret LocoRoco berry or touching a sensitive nerve while inside a giant penguin, thereby causing it to fall on its head and change your gravitational orientation. Intimately memorizing each stage in order to collect all the LocoRoco berries (20 per stage) *could* have been a chore, but the lush graphics, beguiling soundtrack, and intuitively designed levels (you'll holler a mental "yes!" when you find all the secrets) make it a pleasure. Half a dozen mini-games offer variety (the MuiMui House is my personal favorite).

The irony is that the simplistic controls can be too *challenging*. It took me 10 tries to make it to the top of a series of sliding platforms, only to accidentally jump too far, fall all the way down, and have to do it all over again...and again...and yes, again. (Confession: in my frustration, I may have made my LocoRoco cry.) The good news is that practice helps, and the physics-based movements, though not as tight as in other platformers, are otherwise solid.

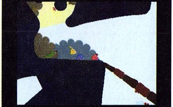
If *LocoRoco's* too-cute art style turns you off or its odd gameplay still confuses you, trust me. Give *LocoRoco 2* 30 open-minded minutes. You won't regret it.

Teresa Dun

★★★★½

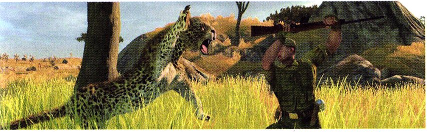
Irresistible Mini-games

MuiMui House
Build a home for the MuiMui (the LocoRoco's good friends) by constructing bedrooms, dartboards, balconies, and underwear drawers with items you find in various stages.


Loco Race
Like horse racing, bet on your favorite LocoRoco to win items for your MuiMui house. (Hint: some shapes perform better than others!)

Nyokki NyoNyokki
LocoRoco's version of Whack-A-Mole.

Slave Driver: During load screens, furiously tap the Circle button. Bet you never knew a MuiMui could mine so quickly!



Listen to the sounds of the wild or you'll be pounced upon.

Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2009

Spare the animals, shoot the game

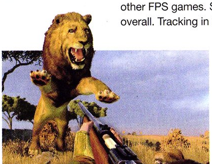
PS3 MSRP: $39.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: Activision DEVELOPER: Sand Grain Studios

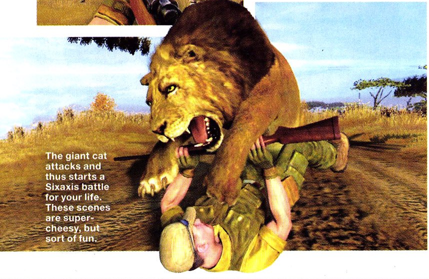
For a game that's about stalking wild animals over vast landscapes, *Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2009* sure misses the target. The environments—from the South African Serengeti to the icy mountains of Canada—are unsubtly linear. As you hunt a jaguar through an Ecuadorian jungle, for example, the low shrubs that block either side of the path may as well be 100-foot tall walls, because you can't walk through or over them. Why? So you're funneled toward a giant snake attack early on, that's why. Ooh.

Your arsenal consists of a high-powered rifle, a lightweight rifle, and a handgun. All of these can be upgraded with better sights, rounds, and stocks for reduced recoil. The missions are a mix of straight hunts, where you track animals, and crowbarred rescue missions involving crashed planes and avalanches.

Cabela's main draw comes from the pseudo–free-roaming bits. Creeping slowly through long grass, while trying to stay one step ahead of a pack of lions, creates an intense atmosphere that you just don't get in other FPS games. Sadly, the game is a mess overall. Tracking in Hunter Sense is way too difficult because trails are tricky to find; the mission structure is disjointed; and the graphics are rougher than a bear's bum. Best leave this one out in the wilderness. Nathan Irvinel

★★





The giant cat attacks and thus starts a Sixaxis battle for your life. These scenes are super-cheesy, but sort of fun.

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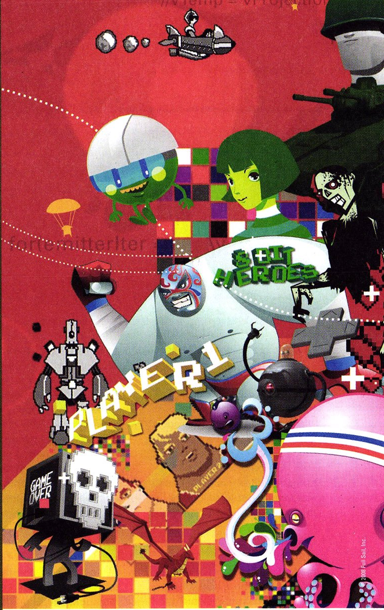

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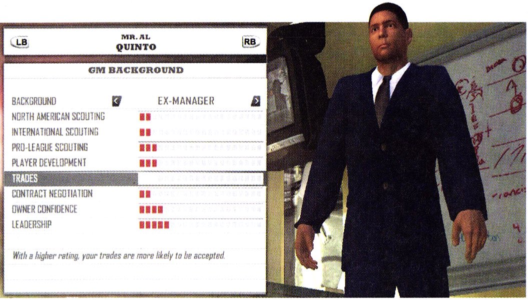


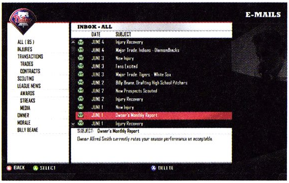
MR. AL QUINTO

GM BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND	◀ EX-MANAGER ▶
NORTH AMERICAN SCOUTING	■■
INTERNATIONAL SCOUTING	■■
PRO-LEAGUE SCOUTING	■■■
PLAYER DEVELOPMENT	■■■
TRADES	
CONTRACT NEGOTIATION	■■
OWNER CONFIDENCE	■■■■
LEADERSHIP	■■■■■

With a higher rating, your trades are more likely to be accepted.

You can choose to play the Fantasy mode, but really I'm not sure who would. It removes the limits of team management, and therefore the challenge. But if you want it, it's there.


E-MAILS
ALL (85)
INJURIES
TRANSACTIONS
TRADES
CONTRACTS
SCOUTING
LEAGUE NEWS
AWARDS
STREAKS
MEDIA
OWNER
MORALE
BILLY BEANE
BACK
SELECT
DELETE

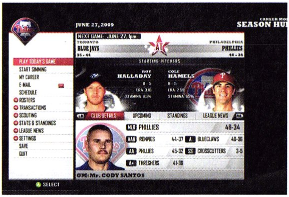
INBOX - ALL

DATE	SUBJECT
JUNE 4	Injury Recovery
JUNE 4	Major Trade: Indians - Diamondbacks
JUNE 3	New Injury
JUNE 3	Fans Excited
JUNE 3	Major Trade: Tigers - White Sox
JUNE 2	Billy Beane, Drafting High School Pitchers
JUNE 2	New Prospects Scouted
JUNE 2	Injury Recovery
JUNE 1	New Injury
JUNE 1	Owner's Monthly Report
JUNE 1	Injury Recovery

SUBJECT: Owner's Monthly Report

Owner Alfred Smith currently rates your season performance as acceptable.

Email is the communication method of all Major League front offices, apparently, and you'll receive literally hundreds over the course of just a few days, particularly when trade and contract offers and rejections are flying.


CAREER MO
SEASON HU
PLAY TODAY'S GAME
START SIMMING
MY CAREER
E-MAIL
SCHEDULE
ROSTERS
TRANSACTIONS
SCOUTING
STATS & STANDINGS
LEAGUE NEWS
SETTINGS
SAVE
QUIT
CLUB DETAILS
UPCOMING
STANDINGS
LEAGUE NEWS
LB
RB
SELECT

JUNE 27, 2009

NEXT GAME: JUNE 27, 1pm

TORONTO BLUE JAYS 35 - 44 AT PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES 46 - 34

STARTING PITCHERS

ROY HALLADAY	COLE HAMELS
0 - 5	8 - 5
ERA 3.16	ERA 2.59
STAMINA 65%	STAMINA 65%

MLB	PHILLIES	46-34			
AAA	IRONPIGS	44-37	A	BLUECLAWS	40-36
AA	PHILLIES	45-32	SS	CROSSCUTTERS	3-5
A+	THRESHERS	41-36			

GM: Mr. CODY SANTOS

Through the menu on the left you can access all the lists you need...just a few too many of them. Though at least the text is legible, and the data access on the disc is swift.

MLB 2K Front Office Manager

Experience the thrill of striking out in a suit

PS3 PRICE: $39.99 ESRB: Everyone PUBLISHER: 2K Sports DEVELOPER: Blue Castle Games

PS3 | R

Job preferences, in order: 1) Major videogame magazine editor (check, w00t); 2) Manager of Sheffield United (up the Blades); 3) General Manager of the San Francisco Giants. Until I can secure a front office gig down the road at AT&T Park, I've been left to the PC spreadsheet-a-thons like *Baseball Mogul*. But to sit in front of my big-screen TV and shrewdly wheel and deal my way to the playoffs? I'm in.

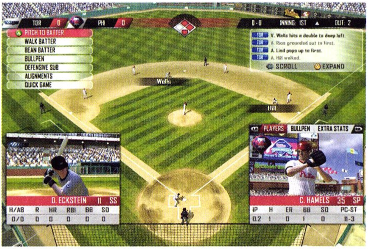
Or I would be if this first significant management sim provided a little more sparkle. It's the plain frustrating elements like shifting never-will-be players down through your minor league system to make room for give-'em-a-shots, and an inability to do this manipulation from the same screen as your pending transaction queue...that makes this drudgery, not front office management excitement.

So after naming your GM, choosing their appearance, and taking charge of the MLB franchise of your choice, you go to work in the career mode. First off is signing a bunch of your players to contracts. Immediately the barrier to realism is broken; though you're provided a salary cap, many of the players are willing to accept deals at less than realistic market values. And most of this year's prominent free agents quickly sign with their current teams. So you're left to trawl through those players you want to get, and want to move out, and finding a willing sucker. It's not easy. The AI won't make bone-headed trades, and you can't make multi-team deals or ones involving more than three players.

By the time you've dealt with Rule 5 draft regulations (fortunately you can auto-solve this conundrum), contracts, and free agency, you're about ready for spring training. Now you can see your team on the field. That really doesn't help, however! Though you can manage each individual game, calling hit-and-runs, steals, and the like, it's not so deep as to let you take advantage of pitch counts or other situations.

But you're likely to skip a lot of that to simulate each game or even simulate bunches at a time. It's definitely worth manually managing roster changes (though it's overly laborious navigating those menus) since your AI will introduce folks from who knows where. And in the end, the work, the commitment, just doesn't pay off with the pizzazz it needs. Maybe this is like the intern's job in the front office, all paperwork, process, and little reward. We'll hope that this either gets improved and rolled into the main *MLB 2K* game, or fully revamped for its sophomore effort. Rob Smith

★★★


TOR 0
PHI 0
0-0
INNING: 1ST
OUT: 2
PITCH TO BATTER
WALK BATTER
BEAN BATTER
BULLPEN
DEFENSIVE SUB
ALIGNMENTS
QUICK GAME
SCROLL
EXPAND
Wells
Hill
PLAYERS
BULLPEN
EXTRA STATS

TOR V. Wells hits a double to deep left.
TOR A. Rios grounded out to first.
TOR A. Lind pops up to first.
TOR A. Hill walked.

D. ECKSTEIN 11 SS

H/AB	R	HR	RBI	BB	SO
0/0	0	0	0	0	0

C. HAMELS 35 SP

IP	H	ER	BB	SO	PC-ST
0.2	1	0	1	0	11-3

The in-game view is full of windows, but looks better in stills than when roughly animated. The options are extensive, but you can't change tactics mid at-bat.

This part of the game shines...unlike the Werehog bits, where it descends into sub-*God of War* buttonmashing.

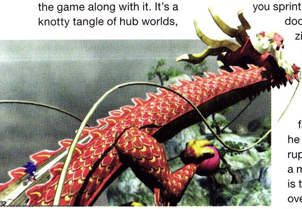
Sonic Unleashed

Confused hog fails to run rings around the competition

PS3 PRICE: $49.99 ESRB: Everyone 10+ PUBLISHER: SEGA DEVELOPER: Sonic Team

You could go from pressing the power button to running through the Green Hill Zone in four seconds in the original *Sonic.* He would even wag his finger at you on the title screen as if to say, "What the hell are you still doing here?" In *Sonic Unleashed,* I'm doing the finger wagging, as Sonic Team serves up garden-variety hedgehog when I came looking for Mobius' famed blue bullet.

Structurally, it's a mess. Story goes: Earth's been cleaved into seven pieces; and apparently the game along with it. It's a knotty tangle of hub worlds, sub-hub worlds, and loading screens. Every five minutes of sprinting action is tempered with the knowledge that stage completion will shunt you back out into these insufferable badlands. As consoles get more powerful, Sonic actually gets slower. Utterly baffling.



Legging it up a Chinese dragon. A glimpse of SEGA and Sonic at their finest.

How Sonic Team got this so wrong when sprinting feels so right is beyond me. Drop into a daytime stage (Sonic turns Werehog at night) and the game soars. Pitched somewhere between platformer and racing game, you sprint along straights, dodge obstacles, and zip from foe to foe with a homing dash attack. Simply getting from A to B isn't the main aim. Sonic gets faster the longer he goes uninterrupted. Falling down a massive death hole is technically game over, but hitting a brick wall and stopping is far more painful. To see Sonic at his best, you have to time your skids, find the best racing line, and use homing dashes to unveil hidden routes.

Thanks to gorgeous art design and the high velocity, *Unleashed* can be seriously good looking (though it stutters at times, oddly in the visually simpler Werehog and hub levels). In fact, the Werehog is a corner that should have been cut. Imagine *God of War* played at a quarter of the speed and you're just about there. From crate-pushing to lever-yanking (all with *GoW's* button pummelling quick-time events) anything Kratos can do, Warehog can do a lot worse. Even baldy's Blades of Chaos are ruthlessly cloned, thanks to the Werehog's whirling elastic limb attacks.

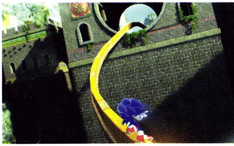
When zipping through daytime stages—dashing past crumbling polar icecaps, grinding a rail miles above a glittering ocean, or sending tables and robotic goons scattering in Italian back alleys—*Unleashed* is fast and occasionally thrilling. Alas, when the full moon rises, it's not just Sonic that undergoes a dramatic transformation: smiles turn to frowns, laughter to swearing, and admiration to immense dislike. Where's a silver bullet when you need one?

Matthew Castle

★★

PS3 | R

Big enemies are accompanied by these smaller chaps. Feed them your fist.



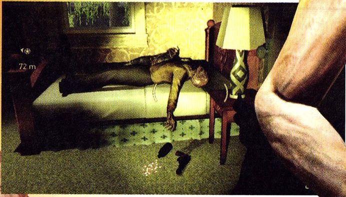
All would be lost if the camera couldn't keep up, but it rarely lets you down.

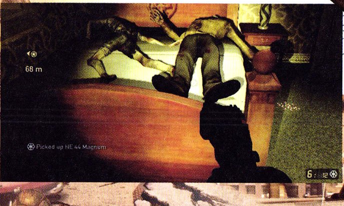
10 GREAT MOMENTS YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED IN RESISTANCE 2

(including a few spoilers...)

1 Family Affair

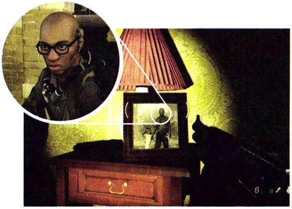
Many of the little extras hidden in *Resistance 2* are pretty bleak, and the sad scene that greets you in the second abandoned house in Twin Falls is probably the bleakest of all. Head into the bedroom and you'll find two bodies on the bed, with pills scattered everywhere, and a magnum on the floor. The first body is a rotting adult human, the second a smaller Chimeran-convert. The scenario writes itself: father finds infected kid and is forced to shoot his own child, then takes an overdose and rests beside him. Yes, it's like that bit from *28 Days Later,* but it's still effectively done.





2 Warner Goes Home

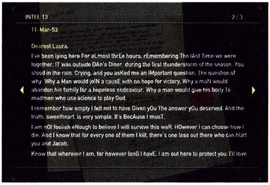
Sergeant Warner reveals to Hale that Twin Falls is his hometown, and that he's desperate to find out whether his family got out alive. What he doesn't say is that you've actually been through his house—it's the fourth one in the abandoned street and has a picture of Warner and his wife on top of the TV. "I'm sure they're fine, Sarge," Hale mumbles, ignoring the thrashing meat sacks packed in his home.



It's blurry, but you can tell it's Warner. Maybe the family is safe? Right?

3 Really Intelligent

In Twin Falls you'll find intelligence report 13. Reports like this are scattered throughout the game and reveal little bits and pieces of plot info and character insight (like the fact that your squadmate Capelli is absolutely mental). This one's worth mentioning because it contains another secret message. While on the surface it's a sappy note from Warner to his wife, on closer inspection the capital letters in the note spell out FLEE ATTACK IMMINENT GO TO BATON ROUGE, an ominous warning.



INTEL 13 2/3

11-Mar-53

Dearest Laura,

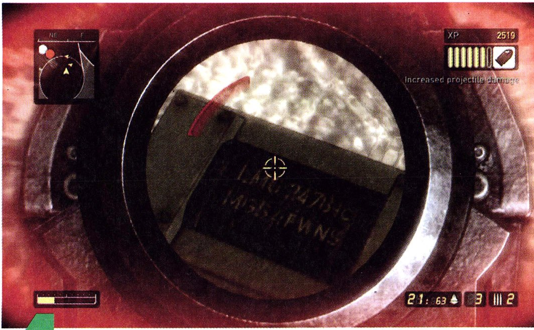
I've been lying here For aLmost thrEe hours, rEmembering The lAst Time we were together. IT was outside DAn's Diner, during the first thunderstorm of the season. You stood in the rain. Crying, and you asKed me an IMportant question. The question of why. Why a Man would joIN a causE with no hope for victory. Why a maN would abandon his family for a hopeless endeavour. Why a man would give his body To madmen who use science to play God.

I remember how empty I felt not to have Given yOu The answer yOu deserved. And the truth, sweetheart, is very simple. It's BecAuse I musT.

I am nOt foolish eNough to believe I will survive this waR. HOwever I can choose how I die. And I know that for every one of them I kill, there's one less out there who can hUrt you and Jacob.

Know that wherever I am, for however lonG I havE, I am out here to protect you. I'll love

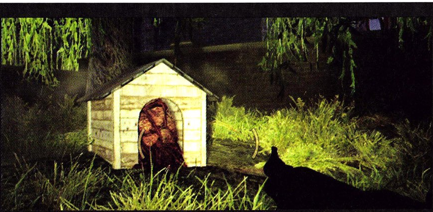
This message subtly fleshes out the main story.



This blatant nod from the developers is solid evidence that they love Snake, too.

4 Metal Gear Solidarity

A proper Easter egg, not as much about the story as it is about how much Insomniac enjoyed *Metal Gear Solid 4.* You can find it for yourself if you activate the Special Ops' prototype ammo beserk during a co-op game and dodge the Chimeran onslaught for long enough to zoom in on one of the ammo crates. Instead of a series of random military digits you'll see the unmistakable message "MGS4 PWNS." Which it does, obviously. Nice to see the PS3 exclusives sticking together, eh?



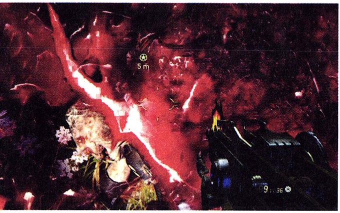
Poochie will still chase balls when he hatches. They'll just be attached to you.

5 What about Rex, Dad?

There are a couple of mean jokes played out with the Chimeran cocoons—like a vacationing family of two large and one small sitting outside a motor home in Orick—but the one that got us chuckling most is a sight gag at the expense of a poor pet. Check out the kennel in the garden of the first house you come to in Twin Falls. Yeah, there are a couple of kids spun into steak-patty death sacks by the play swings, but the really sad thing is that the bastards got the dog, too.

6 Splicing with Death

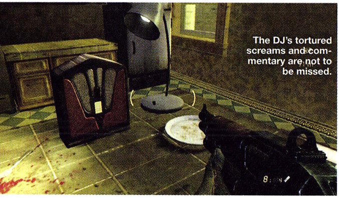
The sawblade-firing Splicer is new to *Resistance 2.* It's a lot like the Buzz Blades gun from Insomniac's other PS3 series, *Ratchet & Clank,* in that they both fire lethal serrated discs that ricochet off walls. There's one thing the Buzz Blades can't do though, which the Splicer can. The alt-fire charges the disc up. The idea is to fire it through crowds of Chimera, but it also makes a handy chainsaw.



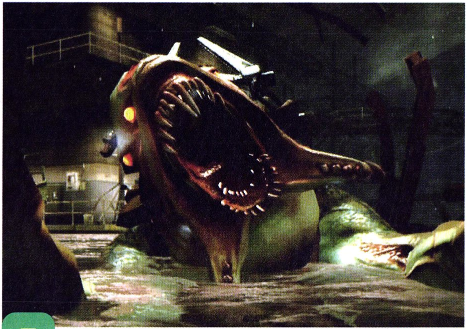
They're a tad inaccurate, but when they hit, enemies burst like balloons.

7 Radio Boo Hoo

Old-fashioned wireless sets are dotted throughout the game. Sometimes they play winding, wistful tunes and feature the broken voice of Henry Stillman, a radio host from Philadelphia broadcasting tales of emptiness and sorrow to the deserted wastes of America. Yeah, they're not cheery, but they are powerful—remembering his lost wife, offering a heartbreaking commentary on a father and son scavenging for food, and giving a final farewell. "I think I will go out for a walk."



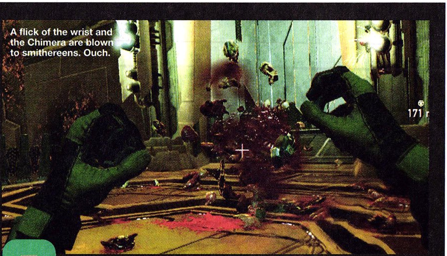
The DJ's tortured screams and commentary are not to be missed.



8 Unleash the Fury

For our money, these are the worst enemies in *Resistance 2,* maybe in any PS3 game.

The indestructo-fishmen Furies are probably the worst things in *Resistance 2.* You can't kill them because they're underwater, which means that your bullets have no effect. And they instantly kill you if you touch them. Ted Price, president of developer Insomniac, says that originally the Furies were going to come onto dry land to attack, but the idea was scrapped because it looked far too "goofy."



A flick of the wrist and the Chimera are blown to smithereens. Ouch.

9 Force Squash

Enormous end-game spoilers coming up. After his final confrontation with his genetic twin Joseph Shepard—the mutation monster now known as Daedalus—Hale receives some kind of psychic shock, which gives him brilliantly violent psychokinetic powers. The final run to his escape shuttle sees him turning wave after wave of Chimeran soldiers into pluming fountains of blood and bits. None of which is hidden or secret in any way but is very cool—so cool we want to see more of it. Which is unlikely.

Down in one, the game fades to black. Is Hale really dead? Probably not.

10

Twinkle, Twinkle

"Your skies will shine with our stars and the Earth will tremble," says floaty alien mastermind Daedalus to Hale early on. And maybe, just maybe, that's the key to whatever the hell is happening during the final cutscene. Some things are self-evident—Hale's gone barmy, Capelli slots him in the brain—but what's all that commotion in the sky? In his last note before his suicide (intel document 20) Dr. Fyodor Malikov warns Major Blake that the crater in Mexico is the focal point for all the Chimeran towers and the enemy are "nearing the completion of a goal more devastating than what we have imagined possible." Bringing their home world to ours maybe? We'll no doubt find out in *Resistance 3.*

The ones we didn't pick...

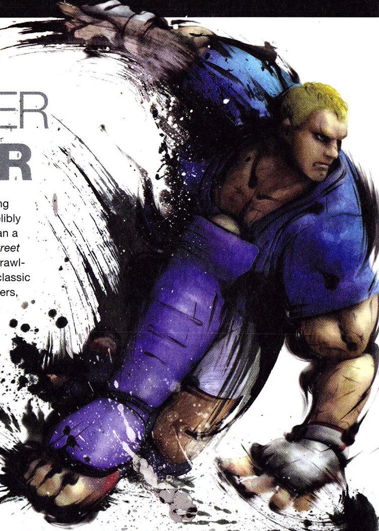
The Mutating Menu
The model of Nathan Hale on the menu screen changes to mirror how much of the campaign you've completed. The virus is taking him over and there's nothing you can do about it.

Future Plans
Just in case you are wondering how the push is going, intel document seven shows a letter from Colonel Rachel Parker to Major Blake stating that the British forces "expect to strike inside the Russian Wall within six months." This march is rumored to be the business of PSP's *Resistance Retribution.*

MARTIAL ARTS MASTERY

BUILDING A BETTER STREET FIGHTER

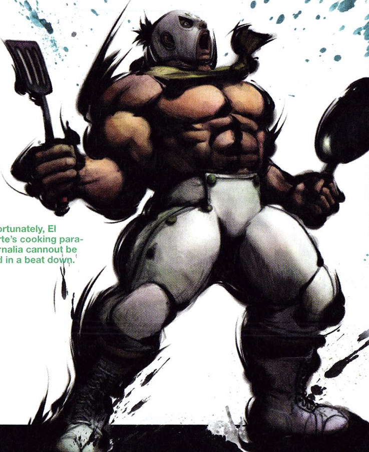
In many ways, *Street Fighter IV* is a pleasantly accessible game. Flashy, exciting attacks like EX Specials and Ultras, for instance, are easy to execute and indelibly satisfying. But if you want to dominate the competition, it'll take a lot more than a few fireballs. That's why we asked Capcom's Senior Community Manager (and *Street Fighter* extraordinaire) Seth Killian for his personal insights into *SF IV's* roster of brawlers, including five of the six brand-new fighters, and a handful of the unlockable classic characters. Armed with his intimate (yeah, we said it) knowledge of these characters, you'll be tearing up the streets in no time. Your training begins now, grasshopper!



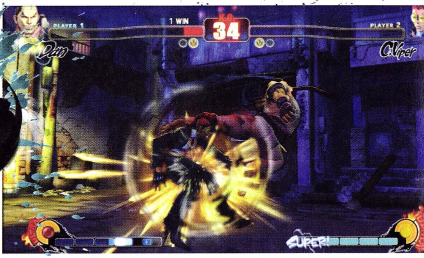
Tall, blond, and handsome? A mysterious, forgotten past? French?! Ladies, take a number.

Abel

Abel wants to be up close to dish damage—and between his extremely fast dash and his Marseille Roll, he has the tools to get in your face fast. From far away, use his Wheel House kick to close the distance and start the mix-ups. Once you're up close, use a combination of short kick rolls to the other side, Tornado Throws (jab version has the most range), and his Change of Direction (the second hit of the punch series is an overhead attack that catches a lot of people sleeping). His jumping forward kick is also a great cross-up move. If it's blocked, go for a Tornado Throw. If it hits, launch them with a crouching fierce punch for an easy opportunity to combo into his Ultra.

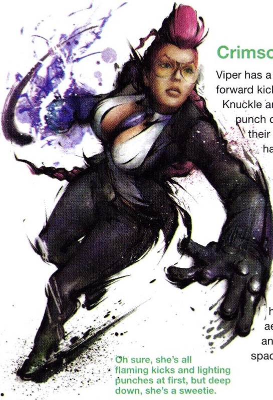


Unfortunately, El Fuerte's cooking paraphernalia cannout be used in a beat down.



El Fuerte

El Fuerte is the hardest-working man in *Street Fighter IV.* Almost everything he does begins with the Habañero Dash, either forward or away. The Dash into strong punch has great recovery and can cross up an unsuspecting opponent, but be sure to mix it up with his fierce punch, Dash throw, or a stop fake—predictability will get you killed with Fuerte. Use his long-ranged Focus Attack to keep the pressure on, and look for chances to land his cross-up jumping fierce punch into a combo. His Ultra Combo is actually best used as an anti-air attack; time it just as the opponent is about to land on you and you'll be invulnerable long enough to grab them up!



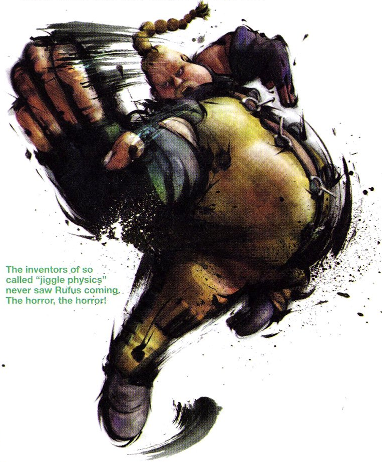
Oh sure, she's all flaming kicks and lighting punches at first, but deep down, she's a sweetie.

Crimson Viper

Viper has a great pressure game. Use low forward kick into (strong punch) Thunder Knuckle and mix in her forward + strong punch overhead to keep opponents on their toes. Her aerial Burning Kick has great range and creates a lot of opportunities, so use it as much as you can. Use fierce punch Thunder Knuckle if you're under attack; it won't beat every attack cleanly, but it can get them off your back so you can reset your offense. Save your super meter for EX Seismic Hammer. It's really safe, fast, and if it hits, you can follow up with an aerial Burning Kick, or even slap an Ultra Combo after that if your spacing is right.

Rufus

He may be big, but don't be fooled: Rufus is one of the fastest characters in the game. Make heavy use of his dive kick and down/forward + forward roll to create stress; when it hits, use his standing short, standing roundhouse target combo to launch the opponent into a free Ultra Combo. He can also land the Ultra Combo after a jumping roundhouse juggle. Rufus likes to stay on the attack, but if you're under pressure, use his EX Kyuuseishu Kick + short kick to knock them away and get out of jail free.

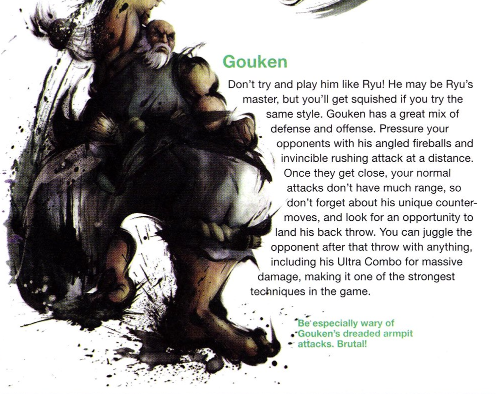


The inventors of so called "jiggle physics" never saw Rufus coming. The horror, the horror!

Dan

Dan is still, well, Dan. Not a great pick if you want to dominate the competition, but if you want to have some fun or just embarrass your foes, he still has some solid techniques. His backdash is actually really effective (and hilarious), so be sure to use it often. The Dankuu Kyaku is also a surprisingly high-priority pressure move, so use it to close the distance and set up guessing games with his Focus Attack, which has good range and speed. His super combo is particularly lame (as it should be), so save your super meter for Focus Cancels or EX special moves. His Ultra Combo, however, packs a real punch in addition to ending with his signature smile.

We...um...ok seriously, what's going on with this pose? Come on, Dan!



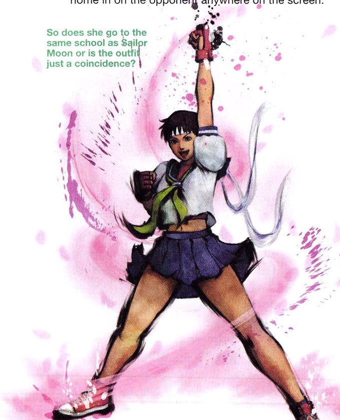
Gouken

Don't try and play him like Ryu! He may be Ryu's master, but you'll get squished if you try the same style. Gouken has a great mix of defense and offense. Pressure your opponents with his angled fireballs and invincible rushing attack at a distance. Once they get close, your normal attacks don't have much range, so don't forget about his unique counter-moves, and look for an opportunity to land his back throw. You can juggle the opponent after that throw with anything, including his Ultra Combo for massive damage, making it one of the strongest techniques in the game.

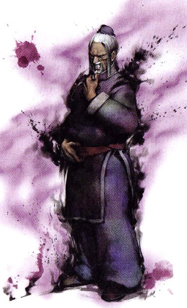
Be especially wary of Gouken's dreaded armpit attacks. Brutal!

Sakura

Sakura shines at a medium range, where she can keep the pressure on with her Hurricane Kick (+ light kick or medium kick) and standing heavy kick, which has great range. If you land a combo, try and end it with an EX Hurricane Kick—it will launch the opponent into the air where you can tack on virtually any other move you like, from a Shou O-Ken to a Sakura Otoshi or even a carefully timed Ultra Combo. If you're caught on the far side of the screen, you can trade fireballs or go for an EX Sakura Otoshi, which will fly any distance and home in on the opponent anywhere on the screen.



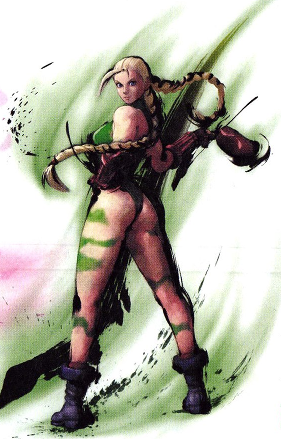
So does she go to the same school as Sailor Moon or is the outfit just a coincidence?



Gen

Winning with Gen requires mastery of both his styles, so be prepared to switch between them on the fly, or even in the middle of a single combo. Two styles mean twice as much to learn, but it also means more special moves, and even more Super and Ultra combos! His off-the-wall Ouga makes Gen one of the most mobile characters in the game, and his punch-mashing Hyakurenkou is a great way to end basic combos, or to push back anybody up in your face. In his Ki-ryuu ("three kick") style, look to land a crouching light kick—it will launch the opponent into the air where you can follow up with anything, including his anti-air Ultra or Super combos.

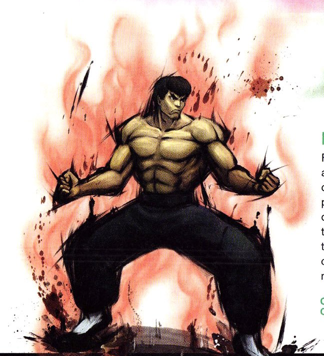
If Gen doesn't teach you to respect your elders, there might just be no helping you.



Cammy

Cammy is best when she's up close and personal, so stay in your opponent's face by throwing out a barrage of quick normal attacks, like crouching medium kick and standing heavy kick. At a distance her Spinning Backfist can blow through fireballs and now covers a huge distance, or the Hooligan Roll can be used to hop over fireballs and catch a sleeping opponent with a throw. Her Focus Attack is short-ranged but quick, so in combination with her fast dash she can pressure opponents by tossing it out and dashing in afterwards to make the opponent guess whether you'll go for a throw or a Cannon Spike (which is also great air defense). If you knock them down, go for a cross up attack and keep the pressure on. Her Ultra Combo is better than the Super Combo, but the Super can be tacked on after a successful Cannon Drill if you're quick. Otherwise, save your super meter for EX Cannon Drills through fireballs and Focus Cancels.

Alright, so who'd win in a fight: Cammy or Lara Croft? Both sexy, both deadly, both British...



Fei Long

Fei Long is a terror from up close and medium ranges. His Rekka Kens can keep you locked down, and he has a lightning-fast dash and great range on his Focus Attack. His Rekkuu Kyaku (aka "the chicken wing") has also picked up some interesting properties in *SF IV,* and if you do it from the proper spacing you can hit from the front and the back sides with the same attack, forcing your opponent to switch their block halfway through or get hit—very powerful. His most significant addition, however, is his new command grab. Much like Yun from *SF III,* if you land it successfully you can tack on a quick combo for free. You can land a quick Shien Kyaku (aka "flame kick") after any successful grab, but the EX command grab really leaves them wide open, so blocking against Fei Long is more dangerous than ever.

Oh man, I loved you in *Enter the Dragon!* Oh, you're not...oh sorry, my mistake.

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WANNA KNOW WHY MY EGO IS SO BIG?

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Digi Wallet

MAGIC

A digital coin is trapped inside the phone. It acts realistically and moves in sync as you tilt, shake and rotate the phone. A final jolt kicks the coin out of the screen, causing it to materialize as a real coin in your hand!

game3949

Realtones

AKON

Right Now (Na Na Na)	song3823
Beautiful	song3824
I'm So Paid	song3825

Ace Hood / Trey Songz - Ride	song3829
Jay-Z - Hard Knock Life	song3830
Jay-Z / T.I. - Swagga Like Us	song3831
Jay-Z / UGK - Big Pimpin'	song3832
Katy Perry - Hot N Cold	song3833
Katy Perry - I Kissed A Girl	song3834
Kevin Rudolf / Lil Wayne - Let It Rock	song3835
Lady GaGa - Poker Face	song3836
Lady GaGa / Colby O'Donis - Just Dance	song3837
Ludacris - One More Drink	song3838
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Ne-Yo - Mad	song3842
Ne-Yo - Closer	song3843
Rihanna - Rehab	song3844
Rihanna - Disturbia	song3845
Rihanna - Take A Bow	song3846
Saving Abel - Addicted	song3847
Soulja Boy Tell Em - Donk	song3848
Soulja Boy Tell Em - Gucci Bandanna	song3849
Young Jeezy - Vacation	song3850
Young Jeezy - Amazin'	song3851

lil WAYNE

A Milli	song3826
Got Money	song3827
Mr. Carter	song3828

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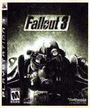
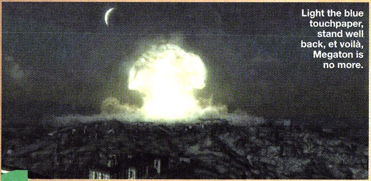
10 WAYS TO BE A COMPLETE BASTARD IN FALLOUT 3



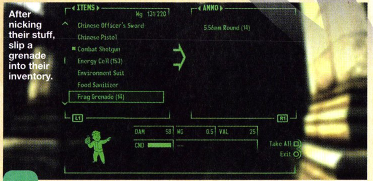
You've subway-crawled through downtown D.C. You've hunted bottle caps until your fingers were sore. You've rolled your eyes at the silly ideals of post-apocalyptic citizens. But until you've walked cruel, selfish steps of the unapologetic bastard, you haven't experienced *Fallout 3*.



Light the blue touchpaper, stand well back, et voilà, Megaton is no more.

1 Blow up Megaton

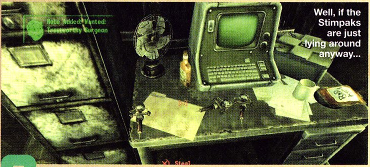
Obvious, but worth a mention because it's the biggest feat of bastardity in the game. Talk to Mr. Burke in Moriarty's pub and he'll give you the device to activate the nuclear bomb in Megaton. (Eat a few Mentats for a quick intelligence boost if your explosives skill isn't high enough.) But if you thought the sadistic fun ended there, go back to the smoking ruins for a surprise. Remember Moira the mechanic, the infuriatingly voiced shopkeeper who gives you the Wasteland Survival Guide quest? She survived the blast and is now a craggy-faced ghoul. It's odd, however, that she barely mentions it at all and merrily continues to repair your stuff.



After nicking their stuff, slip a grenade into their inventory.

2 Plant a grenade in someone's pocket

This is so awesome: Sneak up to any character with their back to you and you can pick their pockets. But this also works in the reverse. When you're pick pocketing, you'll be in that character's inventory and can transfer objects from yours to theirs. If you have any grenades or mines, transfer them and they'll go live. Take a few steps back and watch as the device reduces your target to a mess of twitching limbs.

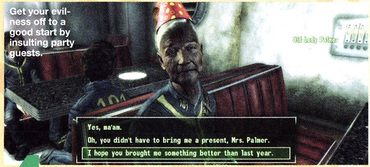


Note Added: Wanted: Trustworthy Surgeon

Well, if the Stimpaks are just lying around anyway...

3 Pilfer med supplies

Low on Stimpaks? Steal them! The clinics in Megaton and Rivet City are full of medical supplies ripe for the picking. Stock up on them either at night while the doctor sleeps, or during the day in front of his stupid, bland face. He won't do anything in retaliation, just moan a bit and call you a thief.

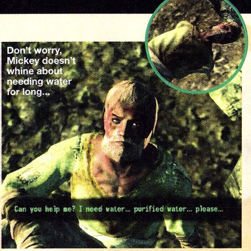


Yes, ma'am.
Oh, you didn't have to bring me a present, Mrs. Palmer.
I hope you brought me something better than last year.

Get your evil-ness off to a good start by insulting party guests.

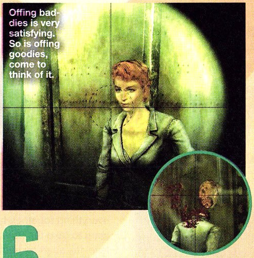
4 Act like a spoiled brat

Fact: your 10th birthday party in Vault 101 sucks. About six people show up, a robot destroys your cake, and you get crappy gifts. So let the guests know exactly how you feel by accepting their gifts and then telling them off. When your dad gives you a BB gun, show your thanks by shooting him in the knees with it. Unfortunately, acting like a devil child won't affect your karma yet, but it will set a suitable tone.

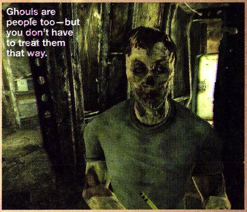


Don't worry, Mickey doesn't whine about needing water for long...

Can you help me? I need water... purified water... please...



Offing baddies is very satisfying. So is offing goodies, come to think of it.



Ghouls are people too—but you don't have to treat them that way.

5 Leave a homeless man to die

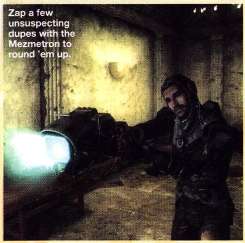
Outside Megaton you'll find a croaky hobo, Mickey, begging passers-by for a drink. In our inventory we have over 50 bottles of purified water, but are we going to share them with him? Of course not. We tell him to piss off and go about our business. Later, upon returning to Megaton, we see Mickey's freshly dehydrated corpse baking in the afternoon sun. That makes us chuckle.

6 Kill for profit

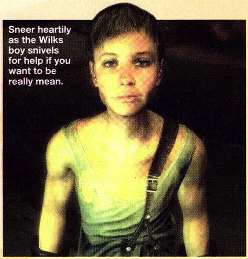
Evil characters can work with a ghoul called Crowley who hangs around Carol's Place in Underworld. He'll give you a list of people he wants killed by a single shot to the head in exchange for caps—the basis of the You Gotta Shoot Me In The Head quest. They're mostly ne'er-do-wells, but you still get bad karma for offing them. Or, just wander aimlessly murdering regular NPCs. Loot their bodies and then plunder their homes for even more profit.

7 Laugh in a ghoul's face

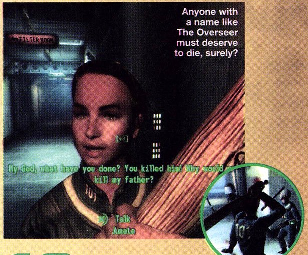
Whenever you come across a ghoul, there's usually a dialogue option along the lines of "God, what are you?" or "Eww! Gross!" Avoid these and you earn the trust of the ham-faced monstrosities, but choose to insult them and you'll genuinely hurt their feelings. They are, after all, still human beings under all that rotting flesh. This is particularly amusing in Underworld, their makeshift city.



Zap a few unsuspecting dupes with the Mezmetron to round 'em up.



Sneer heartily as the Wilks boy snivels for help if you want to be really mean.



Anyone with a name like The Overseer must deserve to die, surely?

My God, what have you done? You killed him! Why would kill my father?

8 Sell people into slavery

If your karma's low enough, the slavers at Paradise Falls will welcome you into their community. Talk to Grouse at the gates and he'll give you a Mezmetron and a slave collar—the tools you'll need to force innocent bystanders into a life of endless, miserable toil. Hit a target with the Mezmetron and they'll become dazed and submissive. Use this opportunity to steal all their clothes and money, then pop the collar on them. This'll make their head explode if they go anywhere but back to Paradise Falls. Ha.

9 Ignore a sad child's pleas

When you first visit the Super Duper Mart, a kid called Bryan Wilks will run to you in a panic. He'll explain that his town, Grayditch, has been overrun by giant, fire-breathing ants, and his father has gone missing. This activates the Those! quest, but it's much more fun to ask him for money in exchange for your help, then tell him where to go when he can't offer you any. "You're mean!" he'll squeal. Talk to him again and there's the option to apologize and take the quest…but what's bastardy about that?

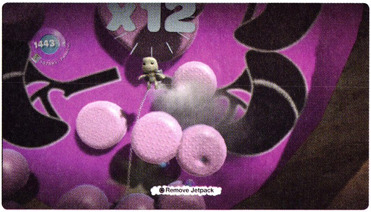
10 Kill your best friend's dad

Your pal Amata helps you escape from Vault 101 at the beginning of the game, but before you reach the entrance you'll be challenged by her dad, the Vault Overseer. You'll be forced to kill his security guard, but can let the Overseer live if you're playing as a goody-two-shoes. We aren't though, so we decide to kill him—with a baseball bat. After all, he has been lying to the Vault about nobody ever entering or leaving, hasn't he?

PART TWO IN AN ONGOING SERIES

LITTLEBIGPLANETEERS

PTOM's favorite original *LBP* levels brought to you by the Sackpeople that created them. Our pick this month:



A mountain of points awaits you at the bottom of the left lung. Air molecules?

The Human Body

This month's pick provides an excellent example of what *LittleBigPlanet* is all about: creativity. Instead of constructing a traditional side-scrolling stage, James took a clever premise—backed by quirky, amusing details (check out the "heartburn")—and gave us a hilarious and enlightening head-to-toe journey through the human body. Sure, skateboarding through the small intestines might conflict a bit with what you learned in Biology, but your brain will love it anyway. Just search for "GP The Human Body" to get a virus-eye view of your insides!

TIME SPENT MAKING LEVEL: About 18 to 20 hours.

INSPIRATION: I was thinking about a level I could make that would be naturally complex. Something people could easily identify and understand. The human body instantly came to mind.

BIGGEST TECHNICAL HURDLES: Holding all the body parts together. I used wood, since the materials were kind of limited in the beta and that's when I made the level. Since wood is naturally heavy and I was very unfamiliar with the creation tools, I had to cut the torso, arms, legs, and head into pieces and hold them together with stiff rods. Later I realized that I could have just glued everything together, but I didn't want to take the risk of having my level fall apart by editing it!

FAVORITE THING ABOUT THE LEVEL: I think the lungs are really fun! I also like that you can exit three different ways: through each leg, or out the digestive system.

ANY DETAILS WE MIGHT NOT HAVE NOTICED? I put in a few quirky references, like butterflies floating in the stomach. I'm not sure if everyone noticed, but if you trigger a switch in the mouth, a jetpack will appear and allow you to go into the eye.

OTHER PUBLISHED LEVELS BESIDES THE HUMAN BODY: I finished a level called Funky Reef that's geared more towards single-player. I also made a level in the beta called How the Stars Came to Be, though its not finished yet.

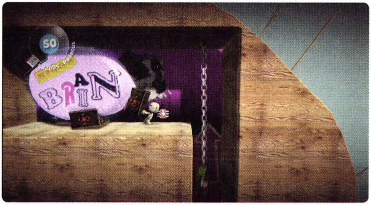
WORKING ON ANY NEW LEVELS? Oh yes. Count on it. I don't like spoiling surprises, but I have a few ideas.

ADVICE TO NEW LEVEL DESIGNERS: Take your time. The level designer is easy to learn yet complex to master, and creating deep, detailed, and engaging levels takes quite a bit of time. If you can't make up any original ideas on your own, I suggest building your level around a certain theme, like outer space or the jungle. Also, remember to test your levels thoroughly! It's probably one of the more time-consuming tasks. I think *LBP* gave me a glimpse into the kind of dedication it would take to be a real game designer!

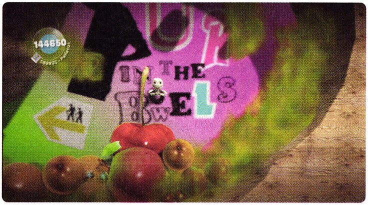
CAN YOU RECOMMEND OTHER LEVELS OR DESIGNERS FOR EVERYONE TO CHECK OUT? I recommend checking out Little Fishy Planet by DrakAura and definitely Ico (FINISHED VERSION) by Mushroom_Samba.

NAME: JAMES JOHNSON
PSN ID: JJMUSICMAN
AGE: 17
LOCATION: TEXAS
OCCUPATION: STUDENT

Do you have any desire to be a professional game designer?
I haven't made up my mind yet, but I've always sort of mused about the idea of making games. I'm a big fan of art, so what draws me to game design more than anything is the opportunity to bring to life the ideas in my head.



If you're clever, you can actually blow up the brain...though you'll explode too.



Remember kids, always chew your food thoroughly and never eat the peel.

N4G

news for gamers

1040°
Far Cry 2 Devs 'Worried' by PS3...
1200°
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(205)
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PS3 News and Rumors

New Playstation 3
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(23)
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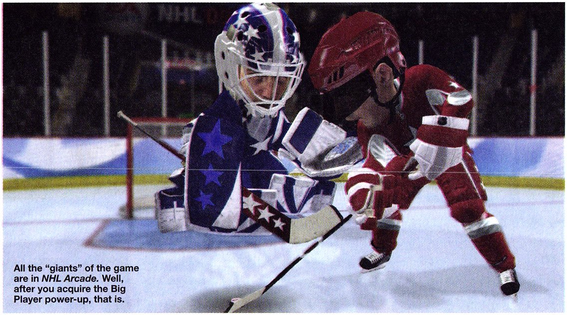
PlayStation Network Games

Downloadable games and add-ons for less than the price of a Snake action figure. We say Yea or Nay.

+ **YEA** You'll get full value for your money.

- **NAY** No legs, no fun, no value.

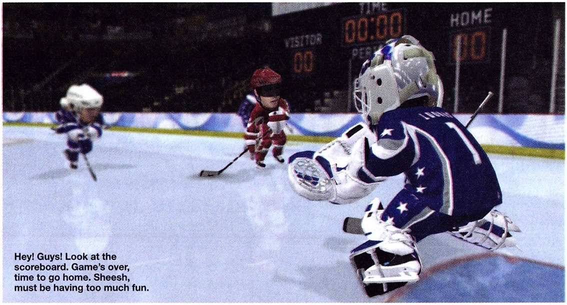


All the "giants" of the game are in *NHL Arcade.* Well, after you acquire the Big Player power-up, that is.

3 on 3 NHL Arcade

PRICE: $9.99 **DEVELOPER:** EA SPORTS

+ If simulation-focused hockey games have gotten a bit too serious and intense for your tastes, *3 on 3 NHL Arcade* will take you back to a simpler time when videogame hockey was all about fun. The near-complete absence of rules, reduced on-ice player count, and smaller rink size make for a fast-paced and manic play experience, but it's the power-ups (which can be turned off) that give this puck an unpredictable carom off the boards. The path-clearing Super Shot and the two-for-one goal multiplying Double Score rank as our favorite gameplay wildcards. A representative sampling of NHL stars populate the roster, but they can only be assigned to generic Red or Blue teams—actual NHL team franchises are conspicuously absent. The $9.99 price tag takes some power out of *NHL Arcade's* slap shot since it should be a quick, *cheap* diversion, but the breezy, engaging off- and online play still manages to find the back of the net. Roger Burchill



Hey! Guys! Look at the scoreboard. Game's over, time to go home. Sheesh, must be having too much fun.

Mahjong Tales: Ancient Wisdom

PRICE: $9.99

DEVELOPER: TikGames/Creat Studios

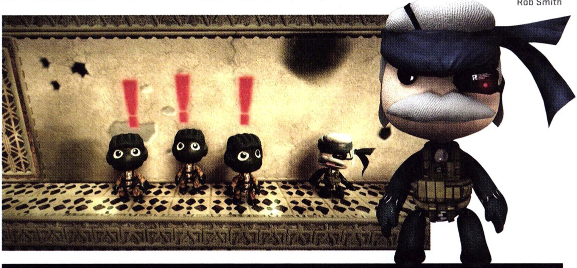
- We all know people who love nothing more than to sit in front of their computers, plastic coffee mug at their side, to play a few hours of *Solitaire* or *Minesweeper* ("Hi, Mom!"). To them, we recommend *Mahjong Tales: Ancient Wisdom.* In classic Mahjong solitaire fashion, the goal is to rid the board of tiles by matching identical pieces. (Unbelievably, it is possible to lose.) Mindless, repetitive action to a soothing (though not particularly interesting) musical score, in reasonably pretty, Chinese-flavored graphics? Nope, not interested. The Motion mode attempts to add sizzle (same gameplay, except some of the pieces float across the screen) and the 16 trophies are moderately tempting, but you already know by now whether you'd gain any value for the $9.99 you'd be plopping down for the game. Teresa Dun

LittleBigPlanet MGS Premium Level Pack

PRICE: $5.99 **DEVELOPER:** MEDIA MOLECULE / KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS

+ A match made in PS3-exclusive heaven, surely. What's most impressive about this *Metal Gear* add-on is how it's clear the designers both cared about the source inspiration, and then executed with Snake-like military precision. I was expecting a few humdrum side-scrolling levels of Sack-Snake dodging terrorists and somehow taking down Gekkos. What I got was the Paintinator (yes, it's a gun), searchlights that trigger traps or enemies (and so must be avoided), and a compelling shift to the *Metal Gear* side for *LBP's* "traditional" gameplay style. My only slight gripe is that the sneak style gameplay (after the tutorial levels) serves mostly to highlight *LBP's* ongoing struggle with controlling your Sackperson on the three planes. You'll error as much as you'll trial, but ultimately you'll prevail…and then you'll have the Paintinator, searchlights, and more to add to your own levels.

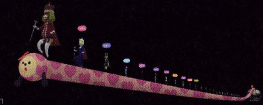
Rob Smith



Coming Soon

Noby Noby Boy

AVAILABLE: Early 2009 **DEVELOPER:** Namco Bandai



By the guy who created *Katamari Damacy* (could ya tell?), *Noby Noby Boy* introduces a worm-like critter named BOY. His life purpose? To eat objects and stretch and stretch and stretch. And then, stretch some more, all the way to the moon and beyond. You'll upload your scores online, and they'll be counted with everyone else's. Then, as the community score increases, new levels will unlock for everyone. Cute way to encourage teamwork.

Teresa Dun

Texas Cheat 'Em

AVAILABLE: Early 2009 **DEVELOPER:** D3Publisher

Cheating at cards usually gets you kicked out of casinos (or beaten, if you're playing with the wrong crowd), but in *Texas Cheat 'Em*, if you're not cheating, you're a fool. Cheating is the whole point of this poker *videogame* (as opposed to the poker *simulations* already available). You'll be given cheat points every round, which you can use to steal chips, see others' hands, swap cards, and more, though you'll have to win a brief mini-game (in the form of roulette, blackjack, slots, horse racing, etc.) to execute the cheat. Up to eight players will be able to participate online, or you can play a single-player campaign with a cast of strange characters.

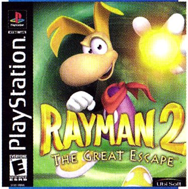
Teresa Dun

WHAT'S IN STORE

This month, zip back a decade or so to replay some of these PlayStation classics. They're available to download to your PSP for $5.99 each.

PlayStation
Suikoden
幻想水滸伝
KONAMI

SUIKODEN
Original Release: December 1996
Genre: RPG



RAYMAN 2: THE GREAT ESCAPE
Original Release: September 2000
Genre: Platformer

PlayStation
Castlevania Chronicles
KONAMI

CASTLEVANIA CHRONICLES
Original Release: October 2001
Genre: Platformer

Letters

Feedback, insight, outrage, and violence in videogames [Really!?]

Random quote from an email that hurt our feelings a little... and that we won't be running:

"Yeah, greedy, backstabbing, bastards in the gaming industry only care about money. PTOM, you are one of them. You are doing every reader a disservice and stealing our money."

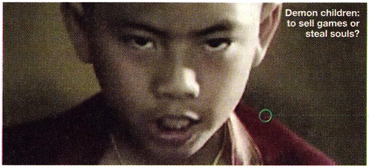
–Magnum

SEEING STARS

I'd do anything to see the Game Ratings guide in every issue like in the old PlayStation Magazine. I like the 1-5 Star Reviews of the PS3 and PSP games, (and not the 1-10), but I get confused and then have to refer back to old issues for the ratings. The ratings/rankings guide has a lot of influence on the games that I purchase. And, I usually purchase all the 5-Star PS3 games as well.

Michael Peoples, via email

Well, we're glad you like our 5-star scale, but unfortunately the Game Ratings guide simply takes up too much space and we think you'd prefer fresh content in those pages. We do have some good news for you, though. We're currently putting together a special issue that will contain our reviews of every single PS3 game released to date, with all the scores converted to the same rating scale! Look for it on newsstands starting February 24.



Demon children: to sell games or steal souls?

EVERYTHING MUST GO!

I don't get it. Why doesn't Sony push the PS3 harder in advertisements? I see 360 stuff practically everywhere, but not enough PS3. Celebrities, parties, sports shows, tournaments, all kinds of stuff. Microsoft pushed the 360 into the

LETTER OF THE MONTH

VIOLENCE IS GOLDEN

In my professional opinion, games have gone down hill lately. Games used to be fun because of their depth and gameplay value, not because of the cheap thrill of blowing off limbs with shotguns. Now developers appeal to people by making their games as bloody as possible. A great example is *Dead Space.* Would Scott have given it a 4 out of 5 if he had to talk with the aliens and try to make peace with them instead of ripping them to pieces with mining tools? I think not! Don't get me wrong, I have liked some games recently *(Uncharted, MGS4),* I just think that as a whole the videogame industry has shifted away from the thing that made it famous in the first place: good ol' fashioned fun. The truly sad thing is that we, the consumers, are supporting the trend. I like a good beheading as much as the next guy, but I think that we rely too much on violence to sell games. I hope this gets you thinking.

"I like a good beheading as much as the next guy, but I think that we rely too much on violence to sell games."

Alex, California

A professional opinion? You do raise a very interesting point, Alex. Violence in videogames is arguably more graphic and intense than ever before—considering both the processing power and visual might of the PS3—and has, in some cases, actually been the focal point of the game. But is violence really any more prevalent than it used to be? Sure, games like *Dead Space* and the oft-scapegoated *GTA IV* feature incredibly graphic content, but we've also got plenty of amazing titles like *LittleBigPlanet* and *Burnout Paradise* that contain no gore whatsoever, proving that today's games can be great without being bloody. Still, we happily join you in encouraging developers to always put gameplay (and fun!) before shock value. Now, how about the rest of you: do you think games rely too heavily on violence? Send your thoughts to PTOM_letters@futureus.com!

LET'S BE FRIEEEENDS!

15

Number of emails we received claiming our reviews are too harsh.

13

Number of emails we received claiming our reviews are too nice.

8

Number of emails we received with "Out of Control" as the subject line. (All from different people.)

public consciousness and that has equaled bigger sales. Sony just gives the public cryptic commercials that most people will be scratching their heads at rather than thinking, "That's totally badass! I've got to get one!" (I'm thinking of you, *Resistance 2* commercial.) Instead of being all nerdy sci-fi cool they need to better explain why the PS3 is better than the competition. Like somehow show that, feature for feature, the PS3 is actually the better deal than the Xbox 360.

Xombieandtaz, via email

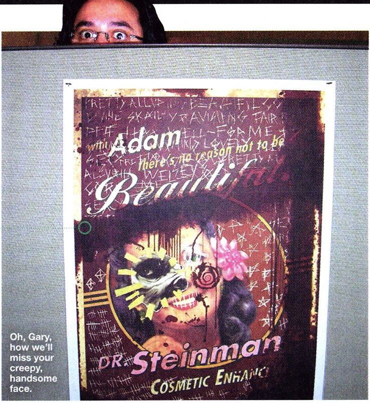
Xombie (or taz), we couldn't agree with you more. Rob came in one day railing about how awful the PlayStation Network commercial was, how it failed to show the PS3, and advertised a function known to the PS3 owner, but offered absolutely nothing of comprehensible value to a potential customer. Now, we're no marketing whizzes, and very smart people are probably paying very expensive, talented advertising agencies very large sums of money to deliver the brand message, but for us (well, Rob in particular) that one failed spectacularly. With an anticipated price drop in 2009 it will be fascinating to see the brand tactics that Sony deploys in the field to combat both Xbox and Wii. Tell us what you think, what you hope, and what you expect.

THE DOCTOR IS IN

On my third playthrough of *BioShock,* I couldn't help but wonder... How many times a day does someone bang on Gary's office door, cubicle wall, or wherever he works and utter the phrase, "You promised me pretty Steinman, you promised me pretty. Now look at me. LOOK AT ME!"?

Ollie Bogwhistle, via email

You know, to be honest, we try to avoid Gary's desk as much as possible...



Oh, Gary, how we'll miss your creepy, handsome face.

SERIOUS PROBLEMS... SERIOUSLY

The January 2009 PlayStation Magazine had an error that beats all errors by a factor of a terrabillion. I was reading the article on Jerry Holkins and Child's Play. Looking at the photo, I noticed something odd...and disturbing. Perhaps the editor has a sick sense of humor, I don't know. In the photo, Jerry is holding a PSP as if it's a game controller. Ok, that's fine; at least Sony makes it. The other person is holding a game controller...a 360 game controller. Huh? No way. Nope, it *is* a 360 game controller. In a PlayStation magazine! I think in pointing out this error I have earned a date with Veronica Belmont, but at the very least I need to know what sort of demonic cleansing ritual I need to use on the issue to rid it of the curse of the 360.

Argus Dune, Vault 101

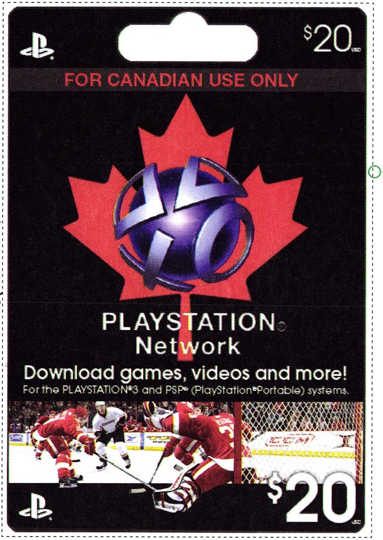
[According to him, anyway.]

Oh...my...God. Oh my God. Argus, we can't even begin to express how sorry we are about this grievous error. To think that we could be guilty of such a heinous oversight, well, it's troubling. *Deeply* troubling. All

Our crack team of artists spent *weeks* fixing this image in order to appease Argus' outrage.

We've received a great number of emails asking us to post our PSN IDs, so we've finally decided to break down and share our secret online identities with you. Add us to your Friends List and you might just catch us online sometime!

- **RobPTOM**
- **ButtersPTOM**
- **RogPTOM**
- **TizzyPTOM**
- **ArtKen**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cut out and keep!

THREESOME

The Reviews Intro page of our January issue featured an alien invasion, and Martian-savvy reader **CHRIS REAVES** managed to name all three. Well done! "Okay, I'm totally fine with the Xenomorphs from *Alien* (top image), even though they scared the bejeezus out of me when I was a kid. I will always have a soft spot for ALF (second image) since I grew up watching that show. I still have a two-foot stuffed version of him at my parents' house. (Hmm...wonder how much my childhood memories might be worth on eBay.) I can't hate on Tanna or Eros from *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (third image) either. Yes, the movie is horrible, but come on! Bela Lugosi's last movie, and Vampira and Tor Johnson?! Classic schlock. So yeah, how's about some junk from Rob's desk? I could use a stapler, Rob (just a hint)."

we can say is that we are very, very sorry about this egregious blunder, and offer this edited version of the offending photograph in an effort to atone for our sins.

Again, we're really sorry. Seriously. Veronica will be contacting you about that date very soon, and we're definitely going to look into fireproofing all future issues of PlayStation Magazine. Thank you for bringing this to our attention.

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

I like my PS3 very much. It's quiet, reliable, and the controllers are the best. So PLEASE SONY, WAKE UP and offer the PSN CARDS in Canada ASAP so I can spend my money on the PSN and help you sell more third party software and games like *PAIN*, *WipEout*, and other exclusive stuff. It's not that complicated to do; how come it's taking you so long?

Jocelyn Côté, Canada

That's a fair request, Jocelyn. Not everyone has a credit card, so why should those who don't be excluded from the wealth of content offered on the PlayStation Network? We don't have any news on when this might happen, but rest assured, we'll pass your message along. Also, congratulations! You could very well be the first Canadian to ever have her full letter printed in the mag. Pretty cool, eh?

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

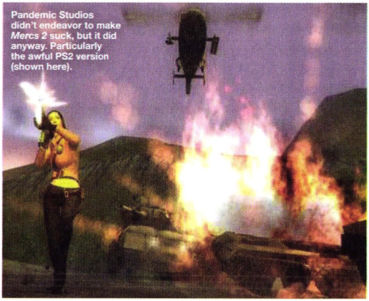
I was playing around with the connectivity functions of the PSP to PS3 when I realized that you can play a PSone game on your PSP through Remote Play. I'm not talking about the ones you can pay money for to download from the store; I mean actual disc copies of games. I was excited at the prospect of being able to reconnect with some of my favorite games from my past, when I realized something was missing that could have made the whole thing so much better: you can't save the PSone discs to the PS3's HDD. I think that having complete portability of some of the games that got me into gaming the way I am today would increase the popularity (and possibly the sales) of the PSP. Do you guys think anything like this will ever end up happening, or am I just wishing for the impossible?

Jack Elliot, via email

We fear you request the impossible. Saving disc-based content to your PS3 hard drive opens a crazy can of potential piracy or hacking worms. Basically, the solution is to make as many of the classic PSone games we all might want to play available for download (how about a few for free). You're entirely right in thinking that more quality content, whatever the source, will make the PSP more popular.

AN ABUNDANCE OF SUCK

I have always wondered: why are there games that suck? I mean, why would someone create a game that is bad? It doesn't seem hard to tell if your game isn't as good as it should be. I see interviews all the time with producers talking about how awesome their new game will be (the new *Golden Axe: Beast Rider* game, for example), and then when they are released, they turn out terrible or just disappointing. So do the producers know that their games are bad,



Pandemic Studios didn't endeavor to make *Mercs 2* suck, but it did anyway. Particularly the awful PS2 version (shown here).

contact **Send your thoughts and comments to PTOM_letters@futureus.com. Because playing videogames has us feeling violent. So if you don't...**

or do they just not care, or is it just a point of view?

Alex van der Colff, via email

Ok, you know how some kids just aren't as smart or as cute or as not-on-fire as the other kids their age, but their parents say they love them anyway? Yeah. And you can bet those parents didn't set out to have crappy children, but nine months is all you get. After that, all you can do is patch 'em up and hope their siblings turn out better.

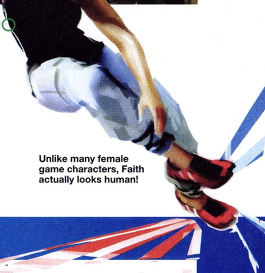
BOOB TUBE

I'm a gamer girl, and well, there aren't any good games that have girls for the main characters! And when games *do* have girls for the main characters, they're slutty and it just ruins it for me! I'm sure the people who design them just think, "Guys will play our games, so let's puts some boob action in there." Well, there are girls like me who are hardcore gamers and can't really stand it. I think it's disgusting and disgraceful that women in games are just slutty characters. I'm going to college just to become a videogame developer and make my own games for us gamer girls that actually enjoy shooting, role-playing, etc.

Marissa Sord, via email

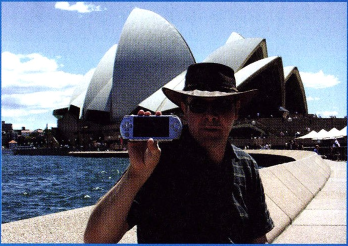
You're definitely not the only one who feels this way, Marisa, and fortunately, you do have a few options. EA's first-person platform-action game *Mirror's Edge,* for instance, stars Faith—a strong, self-reliant woman whose physical proportions fall well within the confines of reality. Bethesda's endlessly deep RPG *Fallout 3* lets you choose your gender at the beginning of the game, leaving you free to create any kind of woman you like. Both games are undeniably worthwhile and neither one conforms to the stereotypes you describe. And though Lara Croft is "uniquely proportioned" isn't she a strong lead character? But we look forward to seeing your games a few years from now.

Show this giant creep what it really means to fight like a girl!



Unlike many female game characters, Faith actually looks human!

PSP WORLD TOUR: PTOM EDITION



You lucky readers aren't the only ones out seeing the world. Rob, our intrepid leader, recently hopped a flight to Australia. Needless to say, his PSP came along for the ride.

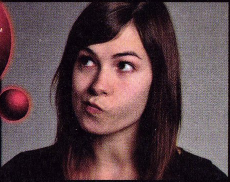
And while exploring the great Down Under, he happened upon the greatest nautical vessel ever to not sink. Luxury and style! Now, do you think they have a PS3 on board?

Photos by Sandy Smith

We figured we needed to jump-start those pictures of readers in exotic places with their PSPs (and managed to self-indulge at the same time). So be sure to send your PSP pics to PTOM_letters@futureus.com.

qore™

Presented by the PlayStation Network



Qore host Veronica Belmont

DJ QBert scratching in front of Veronica.

QORE EPISODE 08

Featuring *Killzone 2, F.E.A.R. 2,* and *Heavy Rain*

The team has put together a terrific show to kick off 2009 as Qore: Episode 08 is now available on the PlayStation Store and features some of the hottest games appearing on PLAYSTATION 3 in the first part of the 2009.

Killzone 2
Episode 08 begins with a trip to Amsterdam for an inside glimpse at one of the year's most anticipated titles, Guerrilla Games' *Killzone 2*. Make sure you watch this feature in HD. It looks awesome!

Heavy Rain
In Paris, Veronica Belmont searches for answers about *Heavy Rain* as she dons the mo-cap suit at Quantic Dream where they aspire to redefine "interactive cinema" with this film-noir adventure title.

F.E.A.R. 2
Seattle is the next destination—a trip inspired by fear—*F.E.A.R. 2*, that is. Monolith was kind enough to share their scare along with some tricks they use to create really spooky sound design.

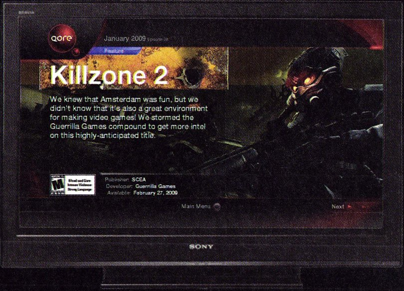
Street Fighter
From the San Francisco Bay Area, we dive into the fanatic *Street Fighter* game culture with a visit to a super-secret, underground Street Fighter Club and take a spin with the legendary DJ Qbert at his home studio where he conceived his *Street Fighter II HD* track.

What's Hot
Check out Audrey Cleo's round-up of the top Blu-ray releases.

Don't miss a new, Qore-exclusive ***Killzone 2*** theme and the ***F.E.A.R. 2*** demo.

Enjoy the show!

Red-eye to rumble...

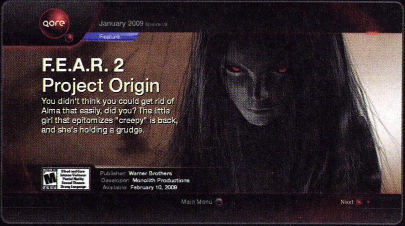


Killzone 2

We knew that Amsterdam was fun, but we didn't know that it's also a great environment for making video games! We stormed the Guerrilla Games compound to get more intel on this highly-anticipated title.

Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Guerrilla Games
Available: February 27, 2009

Thank goodness for little girls...



F.E.A.R. 2
Project Origin

You didn't think you could get rid of Alma that easily, did you? The little girl that epitomizes "creepy" is back, and she's holding a grudge.

Publisher: Warner Brothers
Developer: Monolith Productions
Available: February 10, 2009

Photograph by Mark Madeo

TO REDEEM YOUR CODE: It's now even easier with the Firmware 2.50 update. On the PlayStation Network tab, select Account Management, then select Redeem Codes from the all-new menu.

Enter the code below into the three boxes, then select Continue. Now hit Continue and Accept the download. Sit back and enjoy!

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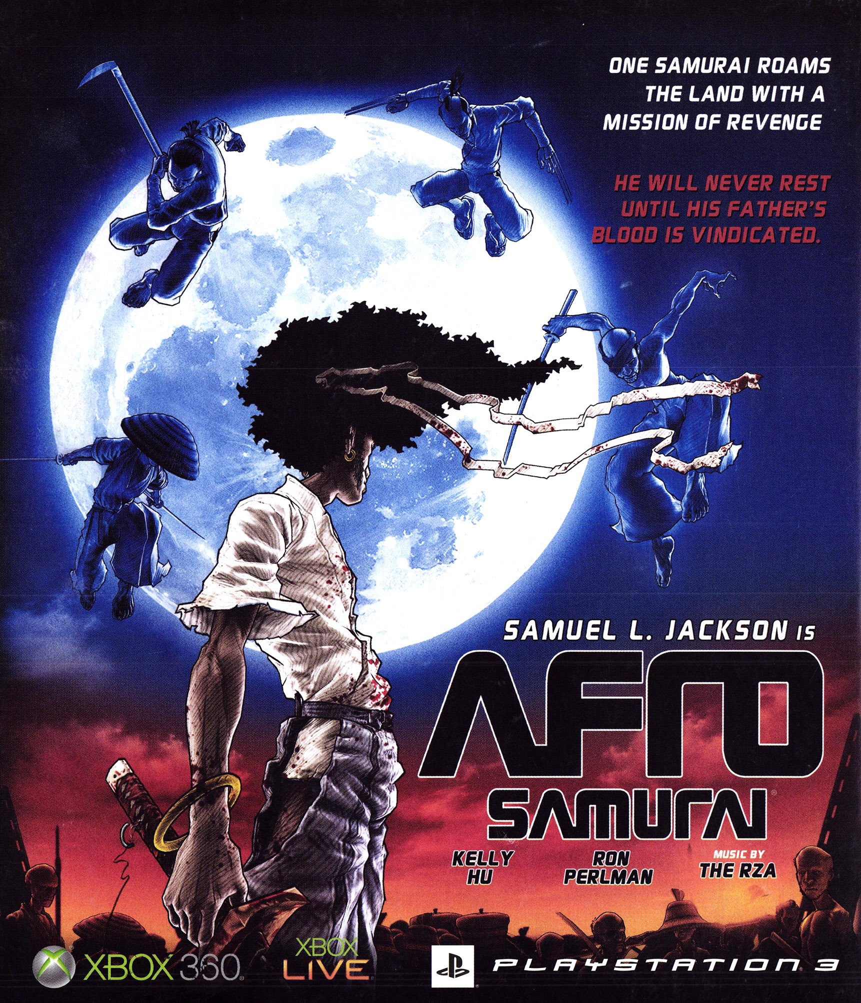
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